THE QUR'AN
AND
THE GOSPELS

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to write these few lines to introduce Dr. Abu Layla's new book *The Qur'an and the Gospels, A Comparative Study* . Dr Abu Layla is a competent scholar who is deeply rooted in Islamic culture as well as Western scholarship, its content and methodology.

We hope that through the efforts of scholars like him will be established a new tradition in the field of Islamic studies in the West.

El-Falah Director

PREFACE

Each person is born in a circumstances which is not of his own choosing. The religion of his family or the ideology of the state is thrust upon him from the very beginning of his existence in this world. By the time he reaches his teens, he is usually fully brain-washed into believing that the beliefs of his particular society are the correct beliefs that every one should have. However, when some people mature and are exposed to other belief-systems, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs.

God gave us all minds and intellects to enable us to make this crucial decision. It is the most important decision in the life of a human being. Upon it depends his future. Consequently, each and every one of us must examine dispassionately the evidence presented and choose what appears to be right until further evidence arises.(1)

Here, In this book Dr Abu Layla, a well-known scholar in the field of comparative religions, examines the authenticity of both the Qur'an and the Gospels objectively with a view to reach a fair and unbiased attitude towards both of them.

El-Falah

INTRODUCTION

To begin with I would like first to inform the readers of this book of my intentions, and perhaps, principles. My intention is to clarify certain facts and where possible to distinguish them from falsehood. I recognize this as a troublesome and difficult area and I am in no way want to disturb or injure anyone's feelings. However, I must state that I oppose those who may falsify facts to come close to what they may hold dear. For this I apologize in advance, but I remain committed to the theme which I am about to advance. The truth does not admit of compromise, it is absolute.

I was once criticized after one of my lectures by a Nigerian lady, in a tone not in accordance with her femininity. She said, "It was my intention to distort and misinterpret the Bible."

I would like to add that she was alone in her view. However, if you don't mind, I would like to re-iterate my answer. I managed to extinguish her anger by smiling at her and she in fact smiled back. I said to her, "Are you a Christian?" and she somewhat over proudly replied, "Yes, I am." I replied, "How can you consider yourself a Christian when Jesus only came to the Jews, and never traveled to your country or received any of your countrymen? Furthermore, he didn't send any of his apostles to Nigeria and equally all of his apostles were Jews, no gentile was among them. He promised his Apostles to sit on twelve thrones to judge the Israelites, not the United Nations."

She replied, "We know Muslims are biased against Christianity."

I answered gently and smiling, "Do you believe that Mohammed was a Prophet?"

She replied, emphatically, "No!"

"What is your evidence?" I asked. The woman said, "In Jesus the prophetic office was culminated and Jesus warned us against false prophets in the Gospels. Of those false prophets to come after him, he said, we were not to believe in them even if they performed miracles."

At this moment a gentleman joined our argument and began to quote the Bible for me. To both of them I replied, "Moses, before Jesus warned his people against false prophets and messiahs who would come after him, "Prophet a dreamer may arise, of thy own race, and foretell some signal event which afterwards comes about; even so he must not persuade thee to follow the worship of alien gods, untried till now." (Deuteronomy, Chapter, 13 Verse 1) So if one applies the injunction of Jesus to Muhammad why not that of Moses to Jesus Christ?

Bearing in mind Jesus warned against prophets and messiahs collectively and not individually. History tells us that Muhammad alone was declared a prophet by God and nobody shared his claim. Even you as Christian do not believe in Muhammad's miracles. On other words, Muhammad was not, in your view, a miracle worker, and by extension could not have been a false prophet. Muhammad's miracle was by no means misleading. His

miracle is the Qur'an, the living word of God, by which he challenged all men and demons, either individually or collectively to produce anything similar to it (either in part or as a whole). Some of the Christians of Muhammad's time mastered the Arabic language, and the same is to be said about the Jews, but none ever met the challenge.

Our missionary lady stopped talking. But the Christian gentleman expressed his complete agreement with the thrust of my argument and my evidence.

Islam's Attitude towards the Prophets

Islam is the irreducible religion of Allah, which was delivered by the prophets of this most Holy since man was sent down to this earth. The Qur'an, the word of Allah, and the first and absolute source of Islam, directly acknowledges the prophets before Muhammad. It relates their missions and struggles to the societies to which they were sent and reports their stories with accuracy and reverence.

Concerning our belief we are commanded by Allah to believe in all prophets, without discrimination. But it should be noted that the Qur'an does make distinctions between Allah's messengers, yet only on the basis of their suffering and forbearance. All prophets command our love and reverence. But those who underwent particular hardship and particular suffering command our special love and reverence. Jesus stands among that number with Muhammad.

Jesus, like Muhammad after him, called his people to bear witness to the prophets who preceded him. Furthermore, he

declared the prophethood of his contemporary John the Baptist. Jesus' mission was declared by John, who bore witness to him as a prophet, but not as a son of God.

Our belief in the prophets is accompanied by our belief in the Holy Scriptures, for as Muslims we hold that all of these Holy Books are the word of God, and originated from Him. The books named in the Qur'an are as follows:The scroll of Abraham, al-Zabur to David, The Torah to Moses, the Gospel to Jesus and the Qur'an to Muhammad. I would like to note in passing that some of these Books are lost, such as Abraham's scroll, and that others were subject to corruption and distortion.

A Muslim's belief in Jesus must equal his belief in Muhammad himself. Whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an a Muslim's eyes would become full of tears and his heart full of affection. Indeed, this feeling runs so deep that we give to our children the names of Jesus and Mary.

But exactly who is Jesus in whom every Muslim must believe? Is he Jesus the Christ? The suffering Messiah? Is he the eternal son of God? The third of the triad? The one who was crucified? Is he God incarnate? Is he the Redeemer?

I do say that Jesus of the Qur'an is also of reality and not just of one the previously mentioned designations. I will therefore have to repeat my question who is Jesus?.

Jesus in the Qur'an

Judging by the number of verses and amount of detail, the information given in the Qur'an about Jesus is extensive I would venture to say that, as a Qur'anic figure *He* is portrayed with more

comprehensiveness than any other. It should be made clear that the Qur'an is not a historical or biographical work in literal sense. In other words the information given about Jesus, for example, was given through revelation, to the unlettered Muhammad who without being an academic historian, corrected the position of Jesus as previously understood, whether by Jews or Christians.

In the Qur'an there are five things which are given special concern, especially in terms of creation. Allah speaks of His creation of the world in ordered sequence (however, this is out of the scope of our introduction) whereas the other four areas are of central importance to the subject of this book; they are: Adam; his children; John the Baptist and Jesus himself.

Because the making of Adam differs from that of the world the process of his creation is recorded in great detail in the Qur'an, as in (15:29 and 38:72).[1] Moreover the making of Adam's children shows another, different, process of creation of clay, then we created of the drop a clot, then we created of the clot a tissue, then we created of the tissue bones, then we garmented the bones in flesh; thereafter we produced him as another creature. So blessed be God, the fairest of creators!" (23:12-14).

In this context we may refer to the making of Eve, who in Genesis (2:21-22) was formed of Adam's rib but in the Qur'an is created from a single soul of mankind.

"Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women"(4:1)

This brief survey of creational process indicates clearly that the world was created out of nothing; Adam was created out of the world; Eve out of him and Adam's offspring out of coition between Adam and Eve. It must be quite clear that all of these were created by Allah and Allah alone. Moreover it is explicit that all things were created by Allah and not out of Allah. I mention this because the Christian belief holds that, as in John, chapter 1, verse 1, the world was created through Jesus out of the word of God. I mention this because it illustrates the power of Allah and the variety of Creation.

In the Qur'an Jesus is called by name; the Messiah by attribute; son of Mary by human ascription, a servant of Allah by obedience, a prophet by the office of prophethood, a messenger by mission, a word of Allah by the way he was created and likewise a spirit from Him(Allah). Some Christians use these titles to support Jesus divinity. For example John of Damascus (c. 675-749), say that : "But since you (Muslims) say that Christ is the word of God and Spirit how can you reviles us .....? ..... if it (the word is outside God) then according to you, God is without a word and without mind. Therefore while you avoid giving God a partner, you divine Him.(2) The author of this quotation while purporting to represent the Muslim view seems closer to a description of the Christian concept, and fails to understand the basic Islamic tenet that the word cannot be divided from God as I explain it in my forthcoming book: Muslim View of Christianity".

Very recently David W. Shenk says in a Muslim and Christian Dialogue "When a Christian looks at the Prophet

Muhammad, he needs to evaluate Muhammad in the light of the total Biblical witness culminating in Jesus the Messiah. To the extent that the Prophet Muhammad accepts the total Biblical witness and the central significance of Jesus the Messiah, and not to the extent that the life and teachings of Muhammad give witness to the revelation of suffering redemptive love which we perceive in Jesus the Messiah, Christian should appreciate and affirm the Prophet Muhammad."(3)

I find it necessary to comment on this statement, but very briefly, Shenk said "Muhammad accepts the total Biblical witness", but this is completely erroneous. First this phrase shows Muhammad as one who can accept or reject in terms of his own humanity. As a matter of fact the revelation given to Muhammad recognizes some Biblical statements and by its very nature refutes others. In our view as Muslims Jesus was not the culmination of prophethood, but Muhammad, as he himself declared, was. It is also our belief that our prophet was foretold in the Torah and he believes in the two books just mentioned in which our prophet was foretold. We believe in Moses and Jesus who bore witness to our prophet. In other words we do not believe in anything that does not foretell Muhammad.

Jesus Titles in the Qur'an and the Gospels

The Qur'an gives Jesus several titles to which I have already referred, here I should like to shed some light on at least some of them.

Firstly: The word of God and a Spirit from Him.

Jesus is called in the Qur'an "the word of God" (4:171), and

according to another verse "a word from Him" (3:45). It should be noted that all the revelations like the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an are called the word of God. Imam Al-Haramyn Al-Juwayni informs us that some Christian apologists assert that Jesus is the word of God and the word according to Muslims is uncreated and this exactly the same as the Christian faith in Christ. Al-Juwayni says that Muslims indeed agree to call Jesus a word or the word. Al-Juwayni supports his view by referring also to the Qur'an in several places, then he goes on to say that the word means also God's decree i.e. that God had created Jesus directly with his word Kun Fayakun "Be and it was". He draws the following from the Qur'an: "Indeed the likeness of Jesus in Allah's eyes is as Adam's likeness, He originated him from dust, then said He unto him, "Be" and he was(3:59).(4) Imam Al-Haramyn suggest that the verse that calls Jesus "Kalima", word from God, Should be studied in connection with the other passage in the Qur'an which deny the doctrine of incarnation and condemn its adherents.(5)

Al-Bukhari argued that the distinction between Jesus and the word could be understood on fundamental linguistic grounds. "Jesus is masculine in gender, but the "word" is feminine, as all Arab philologists agree. "Thus Jesus was created by God through the agency of the word, but is not Himself the word. The English translation of the Qur'anic verse 7:171 states: "His word that He committed to Mary".(6) In the Arabic, however, the word "that"is feminine in gender standing for "word". Thus in linguistic terms "word" being of feminine gender cannot be the equivalent of Jesus. The word entrusted to Mary by Gabriel (Qur'an 3:59).

Al-Bukhari thus sees no difference between the creation of Adam and the creation of Jesus.

The phrase 'The word of Allah' is used in the Qur'an in singular and plural form Kalimatu Allah and Kalimatu Allah, and it expresses different meanings, but its use as a title of Jesus can be explained in several ways e.g. Kalima means the prophecy or the glad tidings or the good news that Allah promised or foretold the prophets. One of our great Muslim scholars, Al-Sharif Aradayy (d. 407 AH = 1016 A.C.) suggests that God calls Jesus Kalima, a word in a metaphorical way, i.e that God guides people through Him as He guides them with His word, a view also held by the Mutazila Abu Ali-Jubbai.

Secondly: Servant

Like all prophets Jesus is called 'Abd, a servant to Allah, in all the Qur'an 19:29-31, "Mary pointed to the child; but they said, How shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child? He said, I am God's servant; God has given me the Book and made me a prophet. Blessed He has made me, wherever I may be; and He has enjoined me to pray and to give the alms, so long as I live".

The word 'Abd here is used as mark of honor and servility to the will and commandment of Allah. It indicates the human nature of the prophets including Jesus, the same title is also given to him in the N.T.

The Christians interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies can serve as an example here. The prophet Isaiah says (53:3) "My servant, many shall be claimed for his own, win their acquitted,

on his shoulder bearing their guilt.[7]

I would like to note in passing that this prophecy refers tc man and not to a God or son of God, more clearly the propl Isaiah never dreamt of speaking of a God or son of God in his foretelling. It seems interesting to bring to your notice that the Jews rejected the Christian interpretations of the Old Testament prophecies altogether, but it is beyond Christian concerning the prophecies of the Old Testament.

The biographical details we have of Jesus show he acted exactly as a servant to a master, he commenced his mission at a certain time namely when he was about 30 years old and this indicates that he followed a commandment and he did not begin according to his own will. Otherwise why did he wait until that time? Why did he not begin according to hid own will. Otherwise why did he wait until that time? Why did he not begin earlier or later than that time? And why did he commence his Divine activities with the Baptism; why did the Divine and sinless require the remission of sin through Baptism? Christians find it difficult to answer this question. I do think that Jesus went to John not only to be Baptized by him, but also to show himself to John and seek his witness and this was in itself a sign of the Baptist's death. The swift death of John lends support to my point of view: The Gospels show that these two personages i.e,. Jesus and John never come in contact before they met in river Jordan, this is also supported by the confusion surrounding the nature of and the relationship between the figures, when Jesus was praying to Allah seeking his help he acted precisely as servant to His Lord, when he expressed his inferior power to that of God's,

when he was asked by a lady to accommodate her two sons in his kingdom, as one on his right hand and the other on his left. Jesus said: "You shall indeed drink of my cup; but a place on my right hand or my left is not mine to give; it is for those for whom my father has destined it." (Matthew: 20 : 23)

When he requested God to deliver him from the cup of death he acted exactly in the same manner as a creature controlled absolutely by his Almighty Allah.

One of our great Muslim scholars in the 11th century looked at Jesus' prayer and anguish before the crucification and on the cross as reported in Matthew; 26:39, Mark; 14:36, and Luke; 22:43-44. Ibn Hazm remarks: "Is this for the character of a Deity or God? Does God pray to be kept away from death? Does God sweat because of the hardship He suffers when he is certain that death is all too imminent? Or when He must face His fatal and? Does God abandon God? Is this not absurd?".[8]

Thirdly: Prophet and Messenger

The Qur'an depicted Jesus as prophet and messenger of Allah, as an example Allah says:

> "And when Jesus son of Mary said, children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmed".(61:6)

Also, Jesus humanity is clearly stressed in the following Qur'anic statement.

> "The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger, Messenger before him passed

> away, his mother was a just woman, they both ate food (i.e. they were human), behold, how we make clear the signs to them, then behold how they are perverted! Say :Do you serve, apart from God, that which cannot hurt or profit you? God is the All hearing, the All knowing" (5:75).

On the Christian side we have a good number or references to Jesus as prophet e.g., according to Matthew: 10:40, Jesus addressed his disciples saying "He, who gives you welcome gives me welcome, and he who gives me welcome gives welcome to Him that sent me. He who gives a prophet the welcome due to a prophet shall receive the reward given to prophets".

In John 12:47 "And if any man hear my sayings and keep them not, I judge him not! For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world".

This clearly puts Jesus in a context of a prophet and not a God, since he came to save as all prophets do, but not to pronounce judgement over the people. In the Qur'an Allah says to Muhammad "Whether We show thee a part of that We promise them, or We call thee, to Us, it is time only to deliver the message, and Ours the reckoning" (13:40). Also Allah says to the Prophet Muhammad -peace be upon him- : "Then remind them! Thou are only a reminder, thou are not charged to oversee them" (88:21-22).

In John 12:45-46 moreover we read "And he that beholdeth me beholdeth Him, that sent me I am come a light into the

world".

This passage speaks of Jesus as a prophet sent by God to guide his people, it deserves special attention to note that Jesus called himself here "a light into the world", in the Qur'an Allah says about Muhammad "O prophet, we have sent thee as a witness, and lamp' (33:45). Also Allah describes the Qur'an itself as "guidance and light" and says about Torah "Surely we sent down the Torah, wherein is guidance and light" (5:44) and also Allah says the same about the Injil: "We gave to him the Gospel wherein is guidance and light" (5:46).

With reference to the above information Jesus cannot be exempted from the prophetic tradition, or distinguished from the other prophets.

As Allah says,

> "Christ the son of Mary was no more than a messenger, many were the messengers that passed away before him" (5:75)

Luke makes the following statement: "And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with him. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, what communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in

Jerusalem and not know things which are come to pass there in these days? and He said unto them, what happens? And they said unto him. The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke, 24:15019).[9]

Those who believe in him declared that he was accounted a prophet by God.

CHAPTER ONE

ISLAM - CONCEPT, DIMENSION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES

The Concept of Islam and its Message

Islam declares itself to be one irreducible religion of Allah which has been delivered by the prophets of the most holy, ever since man was first sent down to this earth. In the Qur'an (42:13) Allah states,

> "The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah - that which we have sent by inspiration to thee - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in Religion, and make no divisions therein.",

and in the Qur'an Islam is described as the religion of Allah (3:19,83).

Islam is described as the religion of truth. Ibn Abbas asked the Prophet which of the religions Allah loves most. The Prophet answered al-Hanifiyya al-Samha the religion of purity and peace (i.e. Islam).(1) Anyone who submits to Allah through his religion as described above is the best of all people (Qur'an 3:125).

In the Qur'an Allah distinguishes Islam as preached by all prophets and concluded by the Prophet Muhammad, from all other religions, commanding Muhammad to say:"To you your religion and to me my religion" (Qur'an 109:6).

The Arabic word Din "religion" is linguistically used to denote any kind of religions, creeds or faiths, whether false or true, whether revealed from Allah or created by man, in whole or in part.[(2)] True religion, according to Islam, is that which Allah revealed to the prophets which He chose from among His people to guide them along the right path. The Qur'an states that Allah did not deprive any nation of a prophet and a message. No people were exempt from this gift of Allah."Thou art truly a warner, and to every people a guide." (Qur'an 13:7 and 4:168).

Allah sent His messengers, each speaking the tongue that would be understood by the people, and revelation is present in the Hebrew Torah, the Psalter and the Aramaic Gospel as well as in the Arabic Qur'an (Qur'an 14:4). Allah also clearly states that He never punishes His people without sending a prophet to warn them and teach them first. To the Prophet Muhammad, Allah states in the Qur'an that He has sent many prophets; some were named, some were not named.

> "We did aforetime sent apostles before thee: of them are some whose story We have related to thee, and some whose story we have not related to thee."(Qur'an 40:78).

This is why we regard religion as the most important thing in the world because it represents God's communication with men. God makes no distinction between nations, since He has sent prophets to all areas of the world, but He does make a distinction between the degree of obedience that they display to His divine word, and the respect that they show to His prophets who deliver His message (see Qur'an 49:13).

The Qur'an directly acknowledges the prophets before Muhammad. It relates their mission and struggles against the

society to which they were sent. The Qur'an reports their stories accurately and reverently, acknowledging their function as prophets. Concerning the Muslim faith, we are commanded by Allah to believe in all prophets, without discrimination. God says:

> "The Apostle believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in God, His angels, His books, and His apostles."We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of his apostles." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (we seek) thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys." (Qur'an 2:285, also 2:136, 42:13).

Ibn Kathir says that whosoever rejects one prophet rejects all prophets.(3) The Muslim is therefore required to affirm his faith in all prophets of Allah and to show devotion to all of them. Hatred shown towards any prophet would cut him off from Islam. The Prophet Muhammad expresses his closeness to Jesus. Abu Hurayra reported the Prophet as having said,

> "I am most akin to the son of Mary of all mankind, and all the prophets have different mothers but one religion, and no prophet came between me and him."(4)

The Prophet affirms the unity of the religions of heavenly origin.

Our belief in the prophets is accompanied by our belief in the Holy Scriptures, for, as Muslims, we hold that all these Holy books are the word of God - and originated from Him. The books named in the Qur'an are as follows: the scroll given to Abraham, al-Zabur, Psalms given to David, the Torah to Moses, the Gospel to Jesus and the Qur'an to Muhammad.(5) I would like to note in

passing that some of these books are lost - such as Abraham's scroll, and that others have been subject to corruption and distortion.

The word Islam is used in the Qur'an by all prophets, for example, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, the Magician at Pharaoh's court, the Queen of Sheba, the disciples of Jesus, also declared themselves as Muslims.(6)

Islam is opposed to disbelief in God, and is in conflict with any form of atheism, but with regard to Judaism and Christianity, Islam believes that they all three came from the same source, the light shone from the same opening in the clouds. Islam has many points of agreement with the other two religions. Of course, there are differences, but despite the historical conflicts they have many things in common. The three religions lived together in harmony throughout the Muslim world. Everywhere in these areas you find synagogues and churches, perhaps side by side with mosques. Christians and Jews had their own schools and courts of Judgment.

Islam means literally "complete submission to God", simply because He is our creator. We do not create ourselves, so we cannot claim authority for our own selves. This is the simple meaning of Islam. The concept of Islam is Islam itself, you can feel it from just reading or hearing the name. It is religion from God, not from Muhammad or any other human. God is the source of Islam, and God is its aim and end. The Prophet Muhammad was the vehicle for its transmission, He was a man chosen by God. His thoughts were not for himself, nor for his companions, nor for the congregation, but for God. This is to say that Muhammad was a holy man and God's messenger.

Islam also means complete acceptance of God and obedience

to Him, not to worship any human, or impose divinity on any idea or system, or even upon the prophet who delivered the message of God. Islam also means to sanctify the word of God, to protect it from tampering or corruption. Islam is a universal religion which addresses all humanity because all should submit their will totally to God. No one has separate will, or can be independent of the will of God. No one knows as God knows.

When we give ourselves to God and rise above our own natural arrogance and our egos then God gives us liberty and consciousness, working as free men but under His control. He will do things for us that are far beyond our capabilities. Everything is given to us by Him and have nothing to give in return but thanks and submission. Someone might say Islam calls us to be slaves, and submissive, it takes away our freedom, our free will as rational humans, and requires us to leave everything to God. This would be called fatalism. This notion might be true if it referred to submission to a fellow human, but submission to God is a different matter entirely. God, of course, created us free, and wants us free, and wants us to be free, but in a godly sense. The wheel is free to move, but not free to leave the axle. If God required us to be captive, He would not require us to work to be good. He would not have sent prophets to teach us what is good and what is bad.

All are equal before God's law. Each one of us has been created only by Him No one else can claim to have created us, only the Almighty. Every individual bears the stamp of God.

It is also useful to mention that the word Islam has wider sense of

obedience,

reliance,

worship,

participation,

peace,

greetings, soundness or good health.

All these real and symbolic meanings of Islam show us what Islam stands for. More precisely, Islam is the religion of Muslims, past, present and future. It contains creeds, law and worship. It is, in brief, a whole system of life, it embraces every aspect of our human activities. In Islam we do not say "give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Matthew 22:21) because everything is God's, including Caesar himself.

Islam's credo is to believe in God, angels, the holy books, revelation, messengers of God, the Day of Judgment, and in one's destiny, be it bad or good.

Islam stands on five pillars: the Shahada or the Kalima meaning the declaration that "There is on god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger".

Then we advance further forward and perform the five daily prayers.

The third pillar is the Zakah, alms-giving. We give either in goods or in money, two and a half per cent of what we have every year, to be given to the poor and needy. This refers to all our possessions, cattle or everything we own.

The fourth pillar is fasting, in Ramadan, a whole month of fasting from dawn to sunset. All people of different ages and countries share this period of fasting during daylight hours.

The fifth pillar of Islam and last is the pilgrimage to Mecca,

once in one's lifetime, when one is physically, financially able to make the journey and secure to do so.

In prayer and in pilgrimage, God is the centre of all one's devotions.The name of the Prophet Muhammad is always mentioned in connection with God, but only as a messenger may be mentioned in connection with his lord and master. In the Qur'an (6:162-163) Muhammad was commanded by God to say:

> "My prayers and devotion, my life and my death, are for God, the Lord of all beings. No partner is with Him"

The belief in earlier prophets and revelations constitutes an important article of Islamic faith. It is not a diplomatic strategy or courtesy to other religions. For example, anyone who does not believe in Jesus, Moses, Solomon or David is an unbeliever, a non-Muslim. Anyone who fails to venerate Mary and do her honour is not to be counted among Muslims. Even when the adherents of the three religions are at war the Muslims never fail to revere Jesus or the Old Testament prophets. The Qur'an dose not contain a single offensive word against any of these prophets. On the contrary, it has been bowdlerized or expurgated of all ambiguous references, e.g. to Solomon in the Bible. Muslims believe that they have their name, i.e Muslims, not from the Prophet Muhammad, but from their great father Abraham, and therefore from God. In the Qur'an (22 :78) God says:

> "Struggle for God as is His due, for He has chosen you, and has laid on you no impediment in your religion, being the creed of your father Abraham. He named you Muslims."

It is extremely important to note that in Islam morality is synonymous with religion. We cannot draw a line between the things that belong to morality and the things that belong to

religion.[7]

On the other hand, it is not proper to perform Islamic religious duties with no regard to their moral context, the empty performance of ritual brings no profit. A Muslim cannot follow the system of ethics and morality, and neglect his Islamic religious duties as prescribed by Allah.

Any Muslim who separates morality from religion or regards virtues as having a provenance other than Allah would not be a true Muslim.

Central to the Muslim belief is the universality of Islam. From the very beginning, Islam addresses itself to all humanity, and thus urges the Muslim to preach and spread its message among all people. Though in the Qur'an, Allah says :"There is no compulsion in religion" (2: 256), He commanded His prophet Muhammad to invite people to the way of God with wisdom and good admonition, and if needed, he could dispute with them in the best of manners. [8]

In his inaugural address of the international Islamic conference at the Royal Alber Hall, London, Saturday 3rd April 1976, Prince Muhammad al-Fisal says:Islam.

> "knows no geographic boundaries or barriers of colour, race or language. Islam is neither of the East nor of West - it is the Message of God, the Lord of the Universe, Lord of the East and Lord of the West, a message sent to the whole of mankind through all the prophets of God and finally through the Prophet Muhammad who was sent as a mercy towards the universe. Islam addresses itself to man as such - whatever be his background, his country, his colour, his race

or his language, and invites him to become conscious of his real position in the world - which is neither that of an abject slave nor that of an absolute master - he is the representative, the vicegerent, the deputy of God on earth, he is a custodian and a trustee of whatever lies within the bowels of the earth or over it.

Everything is for him and he is in the service of Truth, for God."

The Prince goes on to ask:

"What is the real challenge of the modern age?",

And then he answered,

"without going into details, I would like to suggest that man is faced with a bewildering situation today: on the one hand he has achieved tremendous material progress - he has harnessed the forces of nature to his service and created a technological and industrial society unparalleled in its magnitude, grandeur and technical efficiency, but on the other hand, he has failed to control his own baser passions and build human relations on the foundations of love, sacrifice, trust, piety and service. The institution of the family is disintegrating.

Social relations are at a low ebb. Economic exploitation is rampant. Political aggrandizement is the order of the day. International rivalries are on the increase. Cultural tensions are splitting human society apart. Social injustice is tearing the soul of man. Man is proud that he has made a new world; man is ashamed, for this new world.

has failed to make his soul happy. After

reaching the heights of technological progress, he finds his very existence is threatened by the forces of his own creation. He has learned to control his environment but not himself. He has lost direction and his sense of proportion.

If this is the challenge of the modern age then the answer to it lies in rediscovering the principles of balance and proportion, in rediscovering man's mission on life, rediscovering the principles of control in human affairs; in short in rediscovering his relation with God. There is nothing wrong with material progress as such and spiritual discipline it loses its relationship with reality and is exposed to the danger of becoming an instrument of destruction. Man left alone swings to extremes - crass materialism or ascetic spiritualism. Divine guidance leads to the path of balance, the straight path, symbolized in the prayer that God has taught man to pray.

Islam is Divine Guidance, God in His infinite mercy, has not left man alone. He has endowed him with the guidance of the right path. This guidance was revealed through all the prophets of God, from Adam, through Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). The message of Muhammad is not a new message; it is the message of all prophets of God, a message that man has again and again forgotten or changed and distorted. This message was presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him) in its original purity and in its divine perfection. This is Islam.

Islam stands for one loyalty only - man's

loyalty to his God- loyalty to truth and virtue. It establishes the principle that all human beings are equal and it is unjust to discriminate between them on the basis of colour, race or territory - there is only one valid and universal principle of nobility - those who are true to God, who fulfil their commitment to Truth, who prove trustworthy, who are pious and virtuous and heedful of God are noble and those who fail on this criterion are those who fall down.

"Mankind. We have created you male and female and set you up as nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The noblest among you in the sight of God are the most pious and heedful of you". (Qur'an 49:13)

And the mission towards which Islam invites man is to harness all material and human resources for the promotion of virtue, justice and peace. Material progress, yes - but not for the sake of material progress but for the creation of a noble and serene and just society and to seek man's salvation in this world and in the hereafter.

The Qur'an moreover, declared that Jewish and Christian scriptures had suffered corruption and distortion. Yet the Qur'an acknowledges the Divine origin of the two scriptures, calling the Jews and Christians after their Divine book: "The People of the Book" (29:46, 83: 20) "The People of the Injil (Gospel)" (5: 47).

In the Hadith, the two parties are called together "Ahl al-Dhimma" "The Godly and prophetically protected minorities". Under Islam the protected minorities enjoyed equality and freedom. Before Islamic (Shari'a) Law, all people are equal.

Specifically the laws concerning crimes and business dealings make no differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. In a Muslim country, the life of non-Muslims is well protected. The Prophet says,"A Muslim who kills anyone who is living under Muslim protection can never enter paradise. Though the sweet odour of paradise can spread to a great distance, the distance that would take forty years to walk."[11] Unfortunately we cannot go any further with this wide issue. The brief information sketched above clearly shows the Islamic tolerance towards Jews and Christians.

Having presented the concept of Islam, its dimension and its attitude towards Jews and Christians, at this point I feel it is urgently required to talk about the latter's attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad-peace be upon him.

Muhammad in the Torah and the Gospel :

Since the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the three religious communities - Muslims, Christians and Jews - have been in constant debate and dispute about Muhammad as being foretold in the Bible. The People of the Book strongly, If not bitterly deny the occurrence of any prophecy concerning Muhammad as a messenger of God. Muslims on the other hand insist that their prophet was foretold, even by name, in the revelations prior to the Qur'an, specifically the Torah and the Gospel. This is a major constituent of Muslim belief. Central to this is the fact that the Muslim belief in the early prophets and scriptures is qualified by their belief that the Prophet Muhammad was foretold by the preceding prophets. Thus we cannot present Islam fully and rightly without considering the Muslim claim that the Prophet Muhammad was foretold by name and description in

the earlier sacred books.

The Muslim claim stated above will be discussed and evaluated in the light of the Qur'an and Muhammad's biography. On the other hand, the Christian denial of the prophecies concerning the Prophet Muhammad will be sifted and examined in the context of the Biblical foretelling, its implications and bearing.

The Christians in the Western world in general may be surprised to learn that their Bible contains references to the Prophet of Islam. They will be even more surprised to learn that Muslims take some prophecies which Christians believe apply to Jesus, and apply them to the Prophet Muhammad.To the Christians this is a new concept.

The life of Muhammad before and during his mission as a prophet well testifies to the truthfulness of his Apostleship. Muhammad was always aware of the Divine link between himself and the pre-Islamic prophets. He defined his position in the line of prophets by stating that he was "the last brick on the edifice, the missing brick, so that the edifice was now complete".(12) He clearly indicates the continuation and completion of God's message. He says: "I was sent to complete the code of the noblest morality.(13)

Muhammad was also fully aware that his rule as a prophet came as a fulfilment of the Biblical foretelling, a fact which was well endorsed by some Jewish and Christian eminent scholars of his time. Muhammad fulfills every prophetic characteristic perfectly, and thus the world's great prophet and the last prophet to come to Planet Earth. The prophetic office was culminated and sealed after him.

Before Muhammad was appointed as prophet, even in his early years, everyone who saw him noticed the signs of prophethood - in his face, on his tongue and in his behaviour. The Christian monk Bahira noticed this, and affirmend with his own words to the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib, after he saw the seal of prophethood between his shoulders, in the very same place described in his book,

> "Take your nephew back to his county and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil; a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly",(14)

Immediately after, the Prophet Muhammad received a revelation: Waraqa Ibn Naufal, an Arab Christian, old in years and well versed in the Bible told him that he was the prophet of his time, and that what he heard from him was exactly like what was revealed to Moses and Jesus.(15) The Jews of al-Madina were busily awaiting the coming of the expected prophet.(16) From among the Jews of al- Madina, two great Jewish rabbis, Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahb Ibn Munabbih accepted Muhammad and followed him. Even the people who heard of him from far away accepted him as a genuine prophet exactly like Moses and Jesus.(17)

The Qur'an does not only declare that Muhammad was foretold in the Jewish and the Christian scriptures, it also emphatically insists that the Jews and Christians

> "recognize him (Muhammad) as they recognize their sons. But verily, a party of them knowingly conceal the truth".(Qur'an 2:146, 6: 20.

> The Qur'an also asks.
>
> "Is it not a sign to them that the learned men of the Children of Israel knew it (as true)?" (Qur'an 26: 197).

It is very interesting to note that the Qur'an ascribed to Jews alone among the prophets the message to the people that a prophet would come after him whose name would be Ahmad (Qur'an 61:6). This is another name of our Prophet Muhammad, as shall be mentioned later in this chapter.

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad and those who believe in him are foretold in the Torah and the Gospel, recognizable by the prayermark on their foreheads.

> "This is the sign of their prostration in prayer. They have been compared in the Torah and the Gospel to a seed sending forth its blade, growing ever stronger until it fills the sowers with wonder and the unbelievers with fear." (Qur'an 48:39).

The chapter and verse of the Bible in which this prophecy occurred are not mentioned in the Qur'an. It is for us to find out these prophecies.

The Prophecy, its function and purpose :

It is easy for anyone who reads the Bible in Jewish or Christian hands to find many prophecies and foretellings, whether concerning natural happenings such as earthquakes, or concerning kings and principalities. Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel and also Jesus, foretold that great events would happen, like those connected with King.Nebuchadnezar, Alexander, the land of Edom, Egypt, Nineveh and Bael.

Can any Christian or Jew imagine, or agree with the learned rabbis or Christians that their books would contain no prophecy about Muhammad, the Islamic conquests which changed the face of the world and the course of history? Nothing about the Islamic civilization which gave birth to Western civilization? No prophecy concerning the Muslim scholars and saints? This is what the Syriac patriarch Timothy assumed, saying that if he had found one prophecy concerning Muhammad he would have been a Muslim,[18] This despite the fact that many people even greater than Timothy have accepted Muhammad as the fulfilment of the prophecies that they have in the Bible, as I shall mention later.

As a counter argument, some people may point out that there are a lot of prophecies in the Old and New Testaments, but referring to false prophets. Such people try to prove that Muhammad was a false prophet. But If we examine the prophecies referring to the appearance of prophets we see that Jesus, for example, warned against false prophets. He specifically foretold that many false prophets would come after him, and indeed this was so, as we can gather from Corinthians 11:13-15 where Paul gave an account of distinguishing false from genuine prophets. Also 1 John, 4:1:2,

> "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God..."

It is clear that the prophets against whom Jesus warned come into the world after him. In Matthew 24:23 we read:

> "At that time if anyone says to you look, here

> is Christ" or "There he is" do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect - if that were possible."

Jesus did not say that future prophets should be immediately disbelieved, but their message should be tested. Matthew helps us here when he tells us that Jesus said,

> "By their fruit ye shall know them... Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes?" (7:15).

Before Jesus, Moses warned his people against false prophets and messiahs who would come after him :

> "Prophet or dreamer may arise, of they own race, and foretell some signal event which afterwards comes about, even so he must not persuade thee to follow the worship of alien gods, untried till now." (Deut. 13:1).

I may note here in passing that if the Christians apply the injunction of Jesus to Muhammad, as I said once to a Christian critic, why not that of Moses to Jesus? Moreover, Moses also provides us with a yardstick against which we can measure the claim of any prophet. Here I quote Deuteronomy 18:20.

> "But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods must be put to death."

Bearing all this in mind, can anyone with sound judgement and responsibility say that Muhammad is a false prophet? When this is his fruit, one thousand million Muslims of many races living all over the world in all climates - Arab Muslims are now the smallest number. In fact non-Arab Muslims out-number Arab

Muslims by five to one.

Muhammad's fruit is the preaching of the one God the Almighty Allah and calling the people to believe in Him, acknowledge Him and to worship Him alone, delivering the people from sin and darkness to virtue and light, from destruction to life eternal, praising the prophets of God and defending their position, spreading peace and mercy for all mankind, human unity and equality, the brotherhood of nations, morality, virtue and civilization. The Prophet Muhammad never raised himself above the human level - he was only a prophet and messenger of God, not divine himself.

Muhammad was known even among his enemies as most truthful, and God Himself says about him -.

> "No! I swear by that you see and by that you do not see, it is the speech of a noble messenger. It is not a speech of a poet (little do you believe) nor the speech of a soothsayer (little do you remember). A sending down from the Lord of all Being. Had he invented against Us any sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand, then We would surely have cut his life-vein and not one of you could have defended him. Surely it is a reminder to the godfearing, but We know that some of you will cry lies. Surely it is a sorrow to the unbelievers; yet indeed it is the truth of certainty. "Qur'an 69:38-51)

The Prophet Muhammad himself denounced lying; his most hated thing was lies and liars. Safwan Ibn Salim who took Anas Ibn Malik as his source reported that the Prophet Muhammad was asked "Can the believer be a miser?" "yes" he answered. "Can the

believer be a coward:?" "yes" the Prophet said. Lastly he was asked "Can the believer be a liar?" The answer was "No".[19] He was close to expelling liars from being Muslims, as can be seen from the above hadith. Why did Jesus ask his followers to test the mission and the purpose of a prophet before rejecting him? As far as I understand, the prophecy may not be clear enough, or it may be clear to some and ambiguous to others.

I am fully ware that some of the prophecies which I have mentioned and which do not precisely refer to Muhammad or identify him were taken by some evangelists and churchmen and explained as referring to Jesus, such as Deuteronomy 18:18:

> "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee..." as shall be seen later.

But if we know that even Jesus' apostles themselves misconstrued some of His prophecies and failed to understand His purposes, then others may have wrongly criticized the Muslim interpretation.

When John the Baptist was asked whether he was the prophet or Elijah (John 1 : 19) he said"I am not Elijah". "Are you the prophet ?"I am not." They said "who are you then?" Here it is clear that the Pharisees were ignorant of Isaiah's prophecies and even John the Baptist failed to make himself clear.

In Matthew 11:11-15 Jesus said:

> "I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he... And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear".

You will have noticed that the learned Jews and the disciples of Jesus were not certain of the nature of John the Baptist and John himself admits that he did not recognize Jesus until God sent down the sign of the dove at the time of baptism. So this was a period of thirty years before John recognized Jesus by God's sign. The miraculous birth was not enough.

Yet, from his prison, John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Moreover, if we read the prophecy in Isaiah we cannot understand it as a reference either to John or to Jesus. It is a general one. If it pointed precisely to Jesus, the Jews, Pharisees and disciples would not have had to ask him or doubt him. We should bear in mind that the calling in the wilderness is a general character of the prophets of God: it is not a specific reference to John. The Christians take Isaiah's prophecy (7:14) in which he predicted that a woman would conceive and deliver a child to refer to Jesus (he does not mention a virgin). (The Jews still do not believe that Mary remained virgin at the Conception.) Another misinterpretation of prophecies of the Old Testament is Matthew 27:3 FF concerning Judas Iscariot and the thirty pieces of silver, which they identify with Jeremiah the prophet. Reading the prophecy, we gather that the wording and interpretation of Jeremiah are Matthew's own, not Jesus'.

I call upon the reader to open the book of Jeremiah, chapter twelve, verse four, and to read it in line with Matthew and then judge for himself whether the reference is to Judas Iscariot or the rabbis or the betrayal of Jesus. Is it only the similarity in the two passages between the potter's field and the thirty pieces of silver which make it apply to Jesus?

It is nevertheless clear that Jeremiah is talking about himself, using the past tense. He speaks of tending the sheep and taking wages, which he called generous wages, in contrast to that taken by Judas. God commanded him to give it to the potter, not to buy the field. The donation was paid by a prophet to a good man, not paid by rabbis to a betrayer, Judas.

Why do we need prophecy, and when did prophecy start? We ask, is it necessary for a prophet to be foretold by a prophet before him? The answer is emphatically no; the adherents of all religions are in agreement on this answer. For instance, there is no prophecy of the coming of Abraham, nor of Noah, nor of several of the Biblical and non Biblical prophets. In other words, there are many other criteria to test the authenticity of a prophet. For example, it is valid to claim that the truth of a prophet is measured by his character, his miracles, his career, his achievements, and so on.

It is therefore not necessary for us as Muslims to supply proof of Muhammad's prophethood, simply from past prophecies and foretellings. But the question arises, why do Muslims insist that Muhammad was in fact foretold in Jewish and Christian scriptures? It is because Allah himself tells us in the Qur'an that Muhammad was foretold in them as referred to above.

It is true beyond any shadow of doubt that the Prophet Muhammad fulfills all the requirements of a great prophet: his personal life, a radiant inspiration to all people, his achievements in building up nationhood, his performance of miracles of healing, the feeding of multitudes, and finally his own ascension to heaven and descending from it in the sight of <u>al-Isra' waal Mi'raj</u>. In addition to this his true prophecies concerning the wide

and rapid spread of Islam, and major events in world history. A true prophecy can come only from God, and is the highest proof of the divine origin of the message of which it is a part.

Concerning the question of when prophecy started, I would briefly say that prophecy was necessary only when required by circumstance. Prophecy began with the great prophet Abraham. God foretold to him that He would give him sons, son after son, and raise prophets from his seed. The prophecies given by and to Abraham are clear and decisive. God knows best about the conflict and dispute which would occur between the cousins, the Muslims and the Jews, who are respectively the descendants of the two wives of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah.

Even Paul, who is said to preach the gospel of unity between nations emphasizes the difference between the two wives (Galatians 4:21-31), and God, in His greater knowledge of His people, gave prophecies of Jesus before Muhammad because He knew that the Jews might take their books and their prophets as testimony against him in order to defeat his mission and the prophecies of the Prophet Muhammad were given by God so that Jews and Christians might not unite in denying him using their creeds, books, antiquities and traditions as means of rejecting him. Otherwise the deeds and moral character, miracles and success of the Prophet are enough to prove his mission. In the case of Jesus and Muhammad specifically, prophecy has a unique function, and each of these two prophets was supported by many prophetic passages in the Old Testament.

Muslims believe that Jesus foretold Muhammad even by name (Ahmad). Why by name, why was the name prophecied Ahamd, the less common form of Muhammad, we should ask?

Prophecy should not be so precise. The answer is that the prophecy contained the name because of the mentality and character of the people when the Prophet Muhammad came - the Jewish and Christian communities were large and powerful and fanatic. It was necessary that a prophecy should be very clear and give an actual name.

It is essential to point out moreover that Christians believe that Jesus had an extraordinarily super power to predict future events and happenings. In the Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels; we read the following words:

> "If the Hebrew prophets received at times illumination which revealed to them glimpses of coming events, Jesus was at all times able to reveal hidden things of the future with as much certainty as He could speak of the things clearly seen in the present."

The editors of the same Dictionary go on to make comparisons between Jesus and those Hebrew prophets who were able to foretell particular events to individuals, then they say:

> "Here also Jesus surpasses them with a certainty and clearness far beyond theirs. He was able to announce particular coming events to His disciples. Following the Gospel narrative, we find that the treachery of Judas was open to him for long (Jn.6:7 0F). The fall of Peter and his final martyrdom and the prolonged life of John, were all equally clear (Lk. 22:31, Jn. 21:18-22)[21]

Having stated this one could ask, if Jesus was extraordinarily able to give clear and certain prophecies,what wonder then if he foretells the coming of Muhammad by name?

It is amazingly strange that Duncan B. Macdonald asserts that the Muslims have applied the name Ahmad (as in Qur'an 61:6)to Muhammad only because of the references in John to the Paraclete which agrees in meaning with Ahmad,"The praised one"[22] This is a serious charge, not only against Muslims, but also against the Qur'an. The question concerning the veracity of the Qur'an shall be dealt with in some details in chapter two of this book, but it should be absolutely clear that there is no evidence whatsoever, neither to support the assertion that the Qur'anic phrase, Ismuhu Ahmad, whose name shall be Ahmad, was interpolated, nor to give credence to that Muhammad was also named Ahmad from the very beginning.

In this context it is Jesus' Apostles (Acts 11:24; 15:12; 28:9), explicitly recorded Jesus' prophecy concerning the Prophet Muhammad. According to this Gospel, Jesus' clearly announced the coming of "Muhammad the messenger of God", Rasul Allah. The Gospel of Barnabas also agrees with the Qur'an concerning the nature of Jesus' and his message.[23] Unfortunately the church banned that Gospel on the basis of their own reasoning.

Despite the fact that this Gospel agrees with Islam in many fundamental aspects, it does not however satisfy the meticulous criterion of authenticating the text according to the Muslim traditionalists, it stands on a single authority and its Isnad, uninterrupted chain of authorities, is entirely lacking.

Muhammad was the last of the prophets. This is stressed again and again in the Qur'an and in the Sunna, Muslim tradition, because it is of such importance. It is worth emphasizing that none before the Prophet Muhammad claimed that he was the seal, the last of the line of prophets, khatmu al-nabiyyina.

Old Testament prophecies about Muhammad:

As has already been mentioned in this chapter, the Muslims believe in the Torah and the Gospel, and hold that they are the word of God and originated from Him. They also believe that the two texts were subject to corruption and distortion. One might then ask why the Muslims use such distorted texts as evidence. This is an old, and often repeated question. The answer to this is given by Ibn Hazm in his Book al-Fisal.

> "The Muslims acknowledge the Torah and the Gospel, They do not in any way deny them. Moreover, we consider anyone who denies them to be an unbeliever, and we believe also that the disbelievers among the Children of Israel have changed the Torah and the Psalter. They added to them and took things away from them. And Allah the Almighty protected some parts of them against corruption to serve as evidence against them according to his will.
>
> "He shall not be questioned as to what he does, but they shall be questioned." (Qur'an 21:23).
>
> And in the very same way the disbelievers among the Christians changed the Gospel, adding to it and taking away from it, and likewise Allah protected some parts of it to serve as evidence against them according to His will. (24)

Now to deal with the Old and New Testament prophecies concerning the Prophet Muhammad-peace of Allah be upon him.

Firstly, in Deuteronomy (33:2) the fifth and the last book of the Torah we read the following passage:

> The Lord came from Sinai and rose from

> Sa'ir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran." (Deut 33:2)

Sa'ir stands for the hills in Jerusalem where Jesus preached, whilst Paran signifies the heights of Macca where the chosen prophet Muhammad proclaimed his mission. The heavenly light signifies inspiration, revelation and divine prompting. Its interpretation needed three stages: inauguration, continuation and completion. We may therefore interpret this passage of the Torah about the dawn of law-giving as follows:"The Lord came" signifies the arrival, the inauguration. "He rose from Sa'ir"- this is the continuation, the rising of the sun, the appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem. The revelation on Paran represents the completion, with the mission of Muhammad.

The former Jewish rabbi al-Samau'al al-Maghribi (d.576 A.H.; 1180 A.C.)who converted to Islam, looked at the same passage and then stated that the Jews know that Se'ir is the mountain range Sharat (Genesis 36:8, 20, 21; Deut. 2:5; John 24:4), on which lived the children of Esau who followed Jesus. The same author goes on to say that there is clear evidence from the Torah that mount Paran is the mountain of Macca; in fact the Torah states that, when Ishmael parted from his father, Abraham settled in the wilderness of Paran[25] (Genesis 21:21).

Al-Samu'al, moreover, says :

> "Mount Paran is the abode of the people of Ishmael. If the Torah alluded in this verse to prophecy coming from Mount Paran, it follows that it is the prophecy unto the people of Ishmael, because it is they who are the dwellers of Paran. All will then see that the allusion to prophecy from the progeny of Ishmael points to Muhammad, for it was he

> who was sent forth from Mecca, formerly the abode of Ishmael. This indicates that the mountains of Paran are those of Mecca, and that the Torah, in this passage, alluded to the mission of Muhammad and announced it; but the Jews, in ignorance and error, fail to connect these two verses. They admit the premises but, in their excessive ignorance, not the conclusion. The Torah bears witness to their poor understanding and counsel, namely, in the passage.[26](Deuteronomy 32:28-9)

This is a clear-cut prophecy pointing to the Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic faith, which has risen from Mecca and spread all over the world.

Moreover, in Deuteronomy 32:21 and also in Isaiah 65:1FF we find another foretelling concerning the final seal of the prophets. The prophecy, as in Deuteronomy, reads as follows:

> "They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding."

The nation referred to in the above passage is the Arab nation, who were obscure and unnoticed at the time. It is important to note that the above Biblical passage should be read against the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

> "It is He who has raised up from among the common people a Messenger from among them, to recite His signs to them, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom, though before that they were in manifest error." (Qur'an 62:2).

> "That is their likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel: as a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them He may enrage the unbelievers. (Qur'an 48:29)

Again in Deuteronomy 18:18, we read:

> "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

"Among their brethren "is important-this means from brothers of the jews, but not from the Jews themselves. The Jews apply this prophecy to Joshua the son of Nun. The Christians take it as a reference to Jesus. However, firstly, this prophecy cannot be applied to Joshua, since in Deut. 34:10 it is stated:

> "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

Joshua was with Moses and it is not accepted that the reference is to someone present at the time. Moreover, Joshua was from among the Israelites, so how can he be from among their brothers?

The Christian explanation of the above prophecy is even more improbable than that of the Jews; first, Jesus was himself a Jew, like Moses and Joshua, and thus he must be excluded from the prophecy for the same reason. Again, the prophecy talks about a prophet from among the brothers of the Jews; Jesus was one of them, not of their brothers. The more we dissect this prophecy, the more we are certain that it is in no way a reference to Jesus.

One would ask, in which way can Jesus be said to be like Moses? Is it because his mother was a Jewess (as we know he has no father), or is it because he is called a prophet by the evangelists, who also gave him many other titles?

One can also ask, was Jesus the only Jewish prophet to come after Moses? On record we have many other post-Mosaic Jewish prophets, such as Solomon,Isaiah, Daniel, Malachi and John the Baptist. They all were Jews and prophets.

In fact the dissimilarities between Moses and Jesus are various and obvious. The Indian Muslim scholar Sheik Rahmat Allah al-Hindi count ten points of difference between Moses and Jesus; later Ahmad Didat expanded this figure to fifteen.[27] To report but a few examples :

Moses had father and mother, like Muhammad, but Jesus was born miraculously. Moses and Muhammad married and begat children, but Jesus remained a bachelor all his life. Muhammad and Moses were acknowledged as prophets by their own people during their lifetime. According to Jesus "he came unto his own and they that were his own received him not" (John1:11).

Moses and Muhammad were prophets as well as rulers, and they exercised their power in their lifetime. Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world, and he refused to pass judgement.

Moses and Muhammad brought new laws to their people. Jesus said that he came not to destroy the Torah but to fulfil it.

Both Moses and Muhammad died natural deaths, while Jesus was crucified on the cross, according to the Christian belief,

and ascended to heaven according to the Qur'an and the Muslim tradition, without crucifixion.

God has not raised up a prophet from among the brethren of the Children of Israel except Muhammad.

Professor Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud (formerly Reverend David Benjamin Keldani) comments on Deuteronomy 18:18 by saying,

> "If these words do not apply to Muhammad, they still remain unfulfilled. Jesus himself never claimed to be the prophet alluded to. Even his disciples were of the same opinion: they looked to the second coming of Jesus for the fulfilment of the prophecy (Acts 3:17-24). So far it is undisputed that the first coming of Jesus was not the advent of the Prophet like unto thee and his second advent can hardly fulfil the words. Jesus, as is believed by his Church, will appear as a Judge and not as a law-giver; but the promised one has to come with a fiery law in his right hand".(28)

Moreover and more important still, the above prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:18 clearly states that God says "I will put my words in his mouth", and this again referred to the unlettered Muhammad who was taught the Qur'an by God through the agency of the Archangel Gabriel. The Qur'an was but a revelation sent down to him. It was put into his mouth and written in his heart and mind. Thereafter, the Qur'an was written down on anything available- palm-leaf, skins, and even on shoulder-bones- and above all thousands of Muslims committed the Qur'an to their memory, until our own time. It is very important to note that according to the verse under discussion, the Prophet Muhammad

came also to the Jews, and they thus have to follow him..

This is supported by the following words :

> "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of the brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." (Deuteronomy 18:15)
>
> The next prophecy to deal with is Isaiah 21: 6FF, we read:
>
> "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth: And when he seeth a troop, horsement in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he shall hearken diligently with much heed. And he cried as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the daytime, and I set in my ward whole nights: And, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horsemen in pairs. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground. O thou my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.
>
> The burden of Dumah.
>
> One Calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, come.
>
> The burden upon Arabia.
>
> In the forest of Arabia shall ye lodge. O ye travelling companies of Dedanites. Unto him that was thirsty they brought water: the inhabitants of the land of Tema did meet the fugitives with their bread. For they fled away

> from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the swords, from the drawn swords, and from the grievousness of war."

In this passage there is more than one indication of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad, and the place where he shall come; e.g. the rider on the camel in contrast with the rider on the donkey. This refers to Jesus and to Muhammad; none of the camel riders had ever proclaimed himself as a prophet or approached al-Madina where the Jew lived except the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the birth place of the Prophet Muhammad and its surroundings are mentioned in the passage.

In the same book we find also prophecies about Kedar, the great ancestor of our prophet and the son of Ishamel -peace be upon them. The prophecy also alludes to the holy sights and to the prayers of the pilgrims and their glorification of God in Macca and its surroundings. The prophecy also speaks of the decline of Babylon and the destruction of its gods, and this only happened after the rise of Islam.

It is very interesting to note in this context that there is a Jewish Apocalypse of the mid 8^{th} century called the secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yohay, which tries to explain the Islamic conquest of Palestine in Jewish terms, and in the light of Jewish experience. The Apocalypse speaks of the Ishamaelite kingdom saying:

> "Was it not enough, what the wicked kingdom of Edom did to us, but we must have the kingdom of Ishmael too? At once Metatron the prince of the countenance answered and said: Do not fear, son of man,

for the Holy one, blessed be He, only brings the kingdom of Ishamael in order to save you from this wickedness. He raises up over them a prophet according to His will and will conquer the land for them and they will come and restore it in greatness, and there will be great terror between them and the sons of Esau. Rabbi Simon answered and said: how do we know that they are our salvation? He answered: Did not the Prophet Isaiah say thus:"And he saw a troop with a pair of horsemen, et."? why did he put the troop of asses before the troop of camels, when he need only have said :"A troop of camels and a troop of asses"? But when he, the rider on the camel, goes forth, the kingdom will arise through the rider on an ass. Again:"a troop of asses", since he rides on an ass, shows that they are the salvation of Israel, like the salvation of the rider on an ass."[29]

It is clear from this quotation that the Ishmaelite kingdom was recognized as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, and that the Jew found their deliverance at the hands of the Muslims, but the Apocalypse also speaks of the Muslims as invaders, and of the Prophet Muhammad as prophet only for the Arabs, not for the whole world, and we can perceive that the writer of this Apocalypse is trying to say that the Islamic kingdom was intrinsically temporary, only a step towards the Messianic age which the Jews expected. Apart from this, it is clear that the learned Jews accepted the Prophet Muhammad as a fulfilment of the prophecy which they expected from their Holy Book. Of course, there are some Jewish sects who believe that Muhammad was a prophet, but only for the Arabs; this idea is

rather persistent among the Jews. But if anyone believes that Muhammad is a prophet at all, he should be accepted as such without geographical limitations.(30)

Having dealt with a few of the Old Testament references to the Prophet Muhammad let us turn our attention to the New Testament. Of course, it should suffice to rely on the Old Testament prophecies, since these are believed by both Jews and Christians. But it is interesting to note that the New Testament also contains references to and prophecies of the Prophet Muhammad.

New Testament prophecies concerning Muhammad:

The first thing to capture our attention in the New Testament is that there are many passages referring to the coming of the divine kingdom.

Even the work evangelism or Gospel means the good news of the coming.

The preaching of good news is a substantial constituent of Jesus' teaching. Bearing this in mind, and reading in the Qur'an that Jesus foretold the coming of Muhammad by name, makes us reconsider these references in the gospel to "good; news which is to come".

Firstly: In Matthew 3:1ff We read that John the Baptist said: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In the same Gospel (4:12-17) we are informed that when Jesus heard that John was in prison he began to repeat John's message, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In verse 23 Jesus was preaching the good news of the kingdom. In chapter 6 Jesus commanded the disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come." In

chapter 10 he also commanded them to preach that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It is quite obvious here that Jesus followed the same line as John the Baptist in teaching that the kingdom of heaven is near; he also commanded his disciples and apostles to preach its coming . Moreover, he told them to pray to God to hasten its coming.

This means that the thing that was foretold was not Jesus himself nor something of his own time, nor was it in his power, or he would not have said that it was "near", using exactly the same words as John, his contemporary.

It is crystal clear from the above passage that both Jesus and John the Baptist foretold the coming of the kingdom of God, and prayed God for its coming. In our view the kingdom of God means the Islamic kingdom, established, fostered and ruled by the Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic kingdom is godly since it acknowledges no separation between so-called secularism and religion. In other words, the kingdom of God on earth is a religion, a powerful community of believers in one God, equipped with faith and forces or power to fight for its existence and absolute independence against the kingdom of darkness, against all those who oppose the will of God and misrepresent Him.

Here I would like to point out that Christians are in error concerning the concept of the kingdom of God spoken of by Jesus. Even the Apostolic writers failed to understand it, to the point that they avoided the usage of the terms"king"and "kingdom" of God in their writings.

The Christians are divided concerning the nature and position

of that kingdom. Is it easchatalogical? Is it a spiritual, a political organization? Is it national or universal? Is it the Church or the Christian community in general? Or is it the company of the new born and sinless Christians washed and cleansed with the blood of the lamb of God Jesus, as the Salvationists or Quakers believe? Does this kingdom exist in this world or in another? If it is in this world, did it ever manifest or is it still to come? Or will it, as some modern Christian theologians fancied, emerge out of this world as we know it after it has developed under the Christian influence?[(22)]This is to illustrate how the Christians are in confusion about the concept and position of the kingdom of God and its function.

Finally the kingdom of God by any means is the Muslim nation and the Muslim sovereignty. Jesus' annunciation of the kingdom of God to come should be understood in contrast with the ungodly pagan Roman. The Islamic kingdom is for all people and all people are equal in its domain.

As early as Ibn Ishaq (85-151 A. H.)the biographer of the Prophet Muhammad, the Muslims have identified the Paraclete-mentioned four times in John's Gospel (14 : 16, 26, 15 : 26, 16 : 17) with the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Ishaq refers to John 15 : 26,"But when comforter (Paraclete) is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me"And then he says:"The Munahhemana (God bless and preserve him) in Syric is Muhammad in Greek he is the Paraclete.[(31)]

Ibn Hazm takes it for granted that the Paraclet referred to in John's Gospel (14 : 16), in which Jesus prayed to God "to give his followers another paraclete that may be with them for ever "is none other than Muhammad.

The phrase "another Paraclete"implies that Jesus himself was a Paraclete sent by God. This is to say that the Paraclete is not the holy Spirit or the Spirit of God as the Christians wished it to be. The description and function given to the Paraclete in John's Gospel are characteristically of a prophet, not of the Holy Spirit. If this be so, Jesus was a prophet, he is called prophet once and again in the four Gospels.

Here I would like to emphasize that word "another" in Jesus' statement cannot in any way apply to the holy Spirit, since there is one Holy Spirit only, not two or more. Thus it is out of context to say that Jesus asked God to send another holy Spirit.

It is most important to point out that Jesus defined the activities of the coming Paraclet, prophet, as to teach his followers all things, to bring to their remembrance all that he said, and to bear witness of him.

By definition the Prophet Muhammad was the only prophet to come after Jesus, and bear witness of him. It has already been mentioned that Jesus is called in the Qur'an a word from God, a spirit from Him and prophet of God. The prophet Muhammad gave the exact and true picture of Jesus, and has reminded the Christians of the real message that Jesus brought from God, which they have forgotten. The revelation given to the Prophet Muhammad is called Dhikr and Tadhkira, remembrance or an aid to help one recall to his mind the things which have been forgotten, The Prophet Muhammad himself is also called Mudhakkir, reminder.[32]

Allah says:

> "This We recite to thee of signs and wise remembrance. Truly, the Likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then said He unto him,

"Be", and he was. The truth is of God; be not of the doubters." (3:58)

Allah says:

"Ta Ha We have not sent down the Qur'an upon thee for thee to be unprosperous, but only as a reminder to him who fears, a revelation from Him who created the earth and the high heavens." (20: 1-3)

Allah says:

" What, do they not consider how the camel was created, how heaven was lifted up, how the mountains were hoisted, how the earth was outstretched? Then remind them! Thou are only a reminder; thou art not charged to oversee them." (88:19-21)

Allah says:

" Recite what has been revealed to thee of the Book of thy Lord, no man can change His words. Apart from Him, thou wilt find no refuge. And restrain yourself with those who call upon their Lord at morning and evening desiring His countenance, and let not thine eyes turn away from them, desiring the adornment of the present life; and obey not him whose heart We have made neglectful of our remembrance so that he follows his own lust, and his affair has become all excess. Say: " The truth is from your Lord; so let whosoever will believe, and let whosoever will disbelieve."

Allah also says about those who do not follow His commandment pay no attention to His reminding revelation:

"... Then whosoever follows My guidance shall not go astray, neither shall he be unprosperous, but whosoever turns away

> from my remembrance, his shall be a life of narrowness, and on the Resurrection Day We shall raise him blind. He shall say, "O my Lord, why hast thou raised me blind, and I was wont to see? God shall say, "Even so it is Our signs came unto thee, and thou didst forget them; and so today thou art forgotten." (20:123-126)

The Muslims believe that the Qur'an contains all things concerning life and after life. The Qur'an is the final word of God to man. The Prophet Muhammad was indeed foretold in the preceding sacred books, specifically in the Injil, Gospel, where Jesus proclaimed him by name as Ahmad. This admits no compromise.

CHAPTER TWO
THE NATURE AND AUTHORITY OF THE QUR'AN

Muslims believe that the Qur'an in its entirety is the words of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him - over a long period of time, and that the Qur'an was well safeguarded against any form of corruption and alteration.

There are many proofs that the Qur'an is God's revelation. Here I will Summarize the most important evidence. First, the Prophet Muhammad distinguished clearly and sharply between his own words and the words of God. At no time did he ascribe the Qur'an to himself, although it would have been an honour to be able to claim the authorship of such a unique book.

Secondly, the Prophet was keen to write down the text of the Qur'an immediately after he received it from God. To ensure the distinction between his own words and the word of God, he warned people not to write down his own prophetic utterances so that they would not be mixed in with God's words. He even commanded people to take out anything they had written of Muhammad's sayings of that was not part of the Qur'an.

Thirdly, his reception of the Qur'an from God was accompanied by psychological and physical changes in himself, his face flushed and his body trembled and sweated. This was observed by those present. But, in contrast, when he spoke of his own accord, no such things happened. If he were an ordinary author, there would not have been this contrast in the effect on his mind and body according to what he was writing. A man could change from writing prose to writing poetry without such visible effects. And if we look back at the Prophet's life before he was

given the revelations, he did not experience any such changes.

In this context, I should like to say that those who were most interested in analyzing these changes in the Prophet diagnosed him as epileptic. They forgot that the Prophet was fully aware of what he was saying, and could recall the whole experience afterwards. We do not need to dwell on this theory, since it is now wholly discountenanced.

Fourthly, God's speech is distinctive and dose not resemble Muhammad's own words, if we compare the two. Even when Muhammad's words reach the zenith of human rhetoric, they do not compare with words of the Qur'an. The Qur'an compared with them is like the sun compared with the stars.

Fifthly, the Qur'an is miraculous, unlike Muhammad's own sayings. The people, all the people, and even demons, were challenged to produce anything equal to the Qur'an(1) but nobody was challenged to equal Muhammad's hadith.

From the very beginning, Muslims were fully aware of the distinction between God's words and Muhammad's words. They introduce God's words with, "God says..." and Muhammad's hadiths with 'The Prophet says...'

Sixthly, Muslims distinguish between the words of God and the words of the Prophet when they read them out. They use a different tone for the word of God .

The Prophet described some of his companions as"sweet-voiced" when they read the Qur'an. And he himself often asked them to read from it to him. Once he was passing by Abu Musa al-Ash'ari's house and heard him reading the Qur'an. He stopped to listen moved and attracted by his voice. During morning prayer when they met, the Prophet told him he had listened to his recitation the previous night. The man said,"If I had known that

you were listening I could have read even more beautifully for you.[2] The man's voice was naturally sweet.

Once, the Prophet asked Ibn Mas'ud to read the Qur'an for him. The latter said to the Prophet "Should I read it to you when it was revealed to you?"The Prophet replied, "I love to hear it from the lips of others."

Ibn Mas'ud read the chapter concerning women for the Prophet. When he read the following verse:

> "How then shall it be, when we bring forward from every nation a witness, and bring thee (O Muhammad) to witness against those? (Qur'an 4:41)

The Prophet asked him to stop, saying "That is enough." Then the reciter looked at the Prophet's face and saw that his eyes were full of tears.[3]

This clearly demonstrates not only the distinction between the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet, but also the exactness of Muslims' learning of the Qur'an.

The Transmission and Authenticity of the Qur'an

Western man, despite being brought up in the orthodoxies of Christianity, is nevertheless wholly unaware of the Qur'an. There have been several translations of the Qur'an into European languages, a fact which exhibits and supports Western intellectual interest in the Qur'an. The first Latin translation appeared circa 1143, after which several others followed.[4] However, even the quickest glance at these translations reveals that the Qur'an has been misunderstood and what is more misrepresented. With these texts as his only source of reference, it is not surprising that the Western man has an inadequate and misguided view of the Qur'an, and perhaps of Islam itself. I must add that this is in no way a challenge to his sources of reference.

On the question of translation it is interesting to note that within the Muslim community the Qur'an is read predominantly in its original Arabic. This despite the fact that by no means all Muslims speak Arabic as their mother tongue. Indeed, the language of the Qur'an, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, can be regarded as untranslatable. There has always been, amongst Muslims, a drive to understand the Qur'an in its original, to understand as nearly as possible its message and teaching as they were revealed to the Prophet. In this context I would like to note in passing that the notion of translation is generally vexed, but it is clear that the change from one language to another, in almost any form of text, involves subtle, hidden or at worst mistaken changes in meaning. All languages have their own structures and systems of meaning dependent on culturally based or individually recognized forces. Language is to a degree, not directly and purely translatable.

When applied to a holy text, translation also implies the mind of man operating on the word of God. By extension one could argue that to translate the word of God means to adapt, by varying degrees, His message.

I would like to illustrate this with reference to the Torah: The Torah was rewritten by Ezra in Babylonian characters which could be understood by the Jews of the time. There were also many Targums or paraphrases of the Torah among the Jews. We have the LXX or septugent which is in Greek and which differs from the Hebrew Torah on very serious matters.(5) With regard to Jesus, it is established that as a Jew he spoke Aramaic, and thus he must have received his Gospel in that language. It is evident that he conversed in Aramaic with his followers, only a few expressions of its survived in Aramaic (Mark 5:41, 7: 34, Matt.

27: 46) nevertheless, none of the original Gospel has been preserved in the original language.

Having said this I would like to turn my attention to the Qur'an as a text. One of our great authorities on the Qur'an Abu Ubayda Ma' mar Ibn al - Muthanna (d. 210 A.H.) in his book The Rhetoric of the Qur'an defines the Qur'an as "the book of Allah particularly", and asserts that "no other book can be called the same". He explains that this is so because " it gathers together all the Suras "chapters". And he remarks that he derives his definition from the Qur'an itself. That is why the Qur'an cannot be ascribed to any human , it is the Book of Allah.(6)

The Qur'an was in no way mediated or filtered by the human mind, this is to say that no human word was added to it. The Prophet Muhammad alone received it from Gabriel who brought it to him from Allah. The message was transmitted by word of mouth, not in written form.The Prophet received the message as the verbatim word of Allah, in a process of sequential revelation. The context of time and place and human need was required as the message was revealed at different time and places according to the plan of Allah. On the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the revelation was concluded and completed, and the process of transcription ended.

After this, not a book, passage, word or syllable was added to it - the revelation was then total. It is useful to sharpen the authenticity of the Qur'an with reference to the death of the Prophet Muhammad. In the Pentateuch the death of Moses was interpolated by human hands and represents a corruption of the text. "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord" (Deuteronomy34:5).

Concerning the Qur'an however, the death of the Prophet

Muhammad- a most grievous loss to the faithful, was not inserted in the Qur'an. This point helps to illustrate the degree to which the original and unique authenticity of the Qur'an is, and has been, upheld. Furthermore , in contrast to the Pentateuch, and the Old Testament in general, the time and place references of the Qur'an are all of Muhammad's time or before. I say this because in the Pentateuch the variations of time and location, especially with regard to what is "future time", indicate quite clearly an editorial hand or hands. This point helps to further sharpen the authenticity of the Qur'an. (7)

It is instructive to note that at a later date some irreligious people tried to invent traditions that were falsely ascribed to the Prophet.

Muhammad. These falsely innovatory traditions were numerous and they are known to Muslims as <u>al - Ahaditha al - Mawdu'a</u>. The Muslim scholars are quite aware of these false traditions. Yet scholarship has helped to clarify the strict dichotomy between what is genuine and what is false. Now these falsehoods are regarded as insignificant and separate from authentic Muslim orthodoxy.

The inventors of these false <u>Hadiths</u> forced Muslim scholarship to develop criteria by which traditions might be evaluated and sifted in terms of their genuineness. This academic activity is representative of the Muslim character of mind in general. To a Muslim, " authenticity" is an extremely important quality and traditions or other so- called religious activity which does not bear its stamp must be rejected.(8)

By way of contrast to the criteria of authentication applied to the traditions, it may be said that no such criteria has been developed for the Qur'an itself. This may sound surprising at

first, but when one considers the nature of the Qur'an such procedures become irrelevant.

Despite the history of false traditions, there has been no attempt to add to, edit, or in any way alter the original message. Irreligious activity has not been visited upon a text which has always been regarded as sacred and immune from corruption. Furthermore, one might add that with the world wide distribution of the Qur'an, the nature of Muslim scholarship and the already mentioned regard for authenticity as superordinate, any adaptation of the text would have been, and, and is a practical impossibility as well as a spiritual travesty.The impossibility of any additions can be underlined by the fact that from its appearance the Qur'an was widely memorized - so belonging as it were, to the collective memory of Muslims, the opportunity for change was immediately prevented.

The authenticity of the Qur'an rests on two major principles: Firstly, what might be called the superintendence of Allah Himself. Allah, as the revealer of the Qur'an revealed that He Himself would safeguard the purity of His revelation, and protect it from corruption. In the Qur'an 15:9, Allah says: "It is We who have sent down the reminding Qur'an, and certainly We safeguard it (against corruption)."(9)

Secondly, the infallibility of the Prophet Muhammad, the receiver and conveyor of the Qur'an. Given this, the revelation, its reception and conveyance can all be seen as beyond corruption.

Perhaps one may wonder why such a guarantee is applied to the Qur'an and not other books, which according to the Qur'an are of the same nature and in which Muslims believe. However, take for example the Torah which is itself, or rather was itself, the word of God. As the word of Allah should have remained

uncorrupted? But it is quite clear that it has not. The fact that this is so must be regarded as the product of human weakness and the disobedience of God's command. This type of corruption, the failure to protect the words of God, in parallel with the failure to protect His prophets - they killed them - is essentially a failure of humanity and not of God.

I emphasize that the Qur'an as a universal and final revelation and container of the essential teachings of the previous books, is self evidently worthy of Allah's guarantee against corruption.

I would now like to give some more information about how the Qur'an was safeguarded against corruption and still as pure as it was when revealed.

As evidence for this we may look into the character and life history of the Prophet Muhammad. This discussion will also draw upon other facts and elements relevant to the subject. These will be taken from the spheres of the Qur'an and Sunna, history and theology.

Concerning the prophet Muhammad, historical evidence witnesses that in the time of the Prophet Muhammad there was much tribal conflict and internal dispute within the pre-Islamic community. Yet, historical evidence also shows that Muhammad was unanimously and irrefutably accepted as trustworthy. even before his appointment as prophet. He was known simply as al - Sadiq al - Amin, the truthful and trustworthy. Factional dispute became total, pan-tribal acceptance of the judgement of Muhammad even when such judgements may have been contrary to the worldly or political aspiration of those concerned.(10)

This recognition of Muhammad as true and trustworthy goes beyond the Arab pagan to some Arab Christian priests. Waraqa Ibn Nawfal, for example, upon hearing of the revelation given to

Muhammad in Hira' cave gave his assent and trust, recognizing the revelation as the authentic word of Allah.[11] Moreover, when 'Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, was asked about her husband's character and conduct, she answered that his conduct was exactly in accordance with the Qur'an.[12] Muhammad's soul was pure and his heart empty of anything except truth. He led a every simple life, free from all worldly temptation and material ambitions, which can weaken the mind and distract one from the straight path. Free from such diversions, the Prophet was able to direct his energy to the task of memorizing and transmitting the Qur'an. The intellectual effort and unceasing motivation to achieve this must, in part, been a product of his single minded and simple life style.

He received the revelation at the age of forty, an age at which the intellect and judgement, tempered by experience and combine to produce wisdom and humanity. At this point I would like to mention that it is not my intention to distinguish between the Prophet Muhammad and the other prophets - I am a Muslim and I believe in all prophets[13] - it is not my business to construct a kind of prophetic league table. My business does, however, concern the character of Muhammad as a major guarantee of the authenticity of the Qur'an.

Muhammad received the Qur'an and conveyed it five verses at a time, five by five. He immediately called upon his scribes, bearing in mind Muhammad himself was unlettered, thus the time between the reception of the revelation and its transcription was very short. It is evident that the Qur'an was written on papyrus, flat stones, palm leaves, pieces of leather and wooden boards, as well as from the hearts of men. We also have evidence that the Prophet Muhammad ordered the Qur'anic passages to be written

down immediately - this is according to al - Muhasibi (d. 243 A.H, 853 A.C.).[14] It is also on record that Muhammad's Companions immediately committed the verses to memory five at a tim and, continually practised them. To exemplify how the Qur'an was written during Muhammad's lifetime I would like to add the following:

It is reported that the Prophet said to his cousin "Ali" the Qur'an is behind my bed written in a scroll silk and sheets. You take it and collect it, and do not destroy it as the Jews destroyed the Torah",'Ali went and collected it in a yellow garment and sealed it.[15] This is supported by al - Bukhari, who reported, in his Sahih that a man came from Iraq asking 'Aisha, the wife of the prophet, " Show me your book of the Qur'an. The narrator of this tradition informed us of this saying that she got the book out and dictated to him the verses concerned.[16]

During the time of Ibn ' Abbas there arose the question of whether the Qur'an could be transcribed for commercial gain. The latter's disciple wrote hundreds of copies the Qur'an.[17]

The Qur'an was read in written form shortly after the revelation. This is clear from the story of the conversion of 'Umar to Islam, when he found his sister Fatima with her husband reading the beginning of Surat Taha (Qur'an 20) and which they intended to keep secret from 'Umar when he entered the house. There are several traditions which forbid the Muslims to go to enemy countries with a copy of the Qur'an.[18] In the conflict between two certain Muslim parties - one of the two parties held the Qur'an on their spears.[19] This story indicates that the Qur'an was already numerous.

According to Ibn Hazm there were at least 100.000 copies of the Qur'an produced in the beginning of the reign of 'Uthman ,

the third Caliph, about 25 years after the death of Muhammad.[20] The non - Muslim scholars who have studied the Qur'an unfortunately have started from the wrong position, and have used the wrong methods to criticize the Qur'an. In many cases they are weighing precious stones on scales meant for gravel. For instance, they use techniques developed in Bible criticism to criticize the Qur'an when it is something quite different. They ignore the different background and circumstances of each book.

Here I can say a little to bring into focus the background and circumstances of the Qur'an as scripture. The Qur'an was revealed over a long period of time, say over twenty years. It was put to immediate use among a settled community. The evidence for this is multiple and needs no repeating. The Prophet did not die before Islam had spread through the whole of Arabic and Yemen and Bahrain and that area. Mosques were built, the Qur'an was widely read and copied, even in every village or bedouin camp.

The Qur'an was taught in schools as Islam spread. The Muslim children sat and learned in every corner where Islam reached. From the beginning, the Qur'an formed the basis of learning and education.

The situation was such under Abu Bakr, the first Muslim Caliph. The Qur'an was spreading as a written text and in oral form. Even when some Arabs rebelled against Islam in the time of Abu Bakr they did not completely renounce Islam, only refused to obey the command to give alms. There is no evidence that they refused to obey Muhammad or burned the Qur'an or attacked it. There were only a few of them. and were soon restored to Islam.

The Qur'an spread even wider and Qur'anic schools were set up everywhere. As an example to illustrate this I may refer to a

great Muslim scholar, of the second Muslim generation, Ibn 'Amir, who was the judge of Damascus under the Caliph 'Umar Ibn Abd Al- Aziz. It is reported that in his school for teaching the Qur'an there were 400 disciples to teach in his absence.(21) If there were- 400 in just one place, imagine the number of students that they taught, and how many there must have been in all the other cities, towns and villages.

The following hadith helps us greatly to visualize the concern shown by Muslim for the Qur'an:

Malik Ibn 'Auf reported "while we were sitting with the Prophet he informed us about how God will take away all our knowledge before the day of judgment, Ziyad asked the Prophet, How will God take away our knowledge, when the book of God is with us, and we have taught it to our children and women ? Here the man is expressing amazement that knowledge can be taken away from them when even the children and women had learned it by heart.

Indeed, there were many women who memorized the Qur'an. The earliest of them, perhaps was Um Waraqa, who was permitted by the Prophet Muhammad to be the Imam of her family, i.e. to lead her family in prayer, both men and women.(22)In this context it should be noted that Islam considered memorization of the Qur'an a necessary qualification for Imamhood and calilphacy, and leading posts.

It becomes absolutely clear that the Qur'an had an all-pervading influence on the Islamic community. It gave rise to these phenomenal scholars who memorized the complete text. As we noted, those who memorized it also memorized secular texts which might appear unrelated. Islamic education draws no line between religious knowledge and practical knowledge.

It is needless to bring to your attention that Islam and the Muslim state were established during the life of the Prophet Muhammad himself. With Muhammad as a leader the state was run strictly according to the revelation of Allah. As such the Qur'an became the basis of a state and the supreme criterion of judgement. It manifested itself not only as an authentic text but as the authentic and workable basis of a society. It attained a theological, spiritual and social reality as a coherent and all embracing truth.

It is interesting to compare the position with the Bible. The Bible is available in 286 different languages. In Japan, less than one per cent of the inhabitants are professing Christians, but nevertheless more than 150 million copies of the Japanese Bible have been sold in the last few years. In West Germany the Bible is outsold only by atlases and cookery books. However, it may be estimated that out of every hundred people who possess a Bible, only fifteen actually read it. In the words of Manfred Barthel, "The good book seems rapidly to be achieving the status of piece of bookshelf bric-a-brac, or at best an attractive bookend". The same writer goes on to say that a copy of the Bible can even be bought in supermarkets, or it can be removed and taken away from a drawer in a hotelroom without giving rise to any feeling of guilt. In some places one can put a coin in a vending machine and get a pocket- gospel for holiday - makers.

The spoken word of the Bible is also widely available on record and cassette. Cereal boxes are decorated with extracts from the Bible in Americe. Having said this, Manfred Barthel continues,

> "All this does not change the essential fact
> that though virtually no other book has been

> as widely disseminated as the Bible it remains a book that comparatively few readers seem willing to open - in short, a best-seller that no one reads".(23)

The Qur'an unlike other sacred books, was commonly read by all Muslims without discrimination or restriction, rich or poor, men, women or children. Far from being kept from reading the text, they are commanded to read, and memorize it, God will reward them for every single letter they memorize. The Qur'an was not forbidden to anyone to hold, read memorize or quote (except for temporary bans during periods of uncleanness, such as women during menstruation and up to forty days following childbirth, and after sexual intercourse). This even applied to non - Muslim Arabs, and many non - Muslims have learnt passages by heart. The Muslim children memorize the Qur'an in a very early stage of their life.

No Muslim authority can claim to be the sole possessor of the Qur'an. It does not belong to a group of priests, as the Torah does in Judaism where the rabbi unrolls the scroll, reads from it, and then the people disperse. The Torah and the other Jewish books were kept by the Aaronic priests and the public were forbidden to own copies or even to read it. It was solely the business of the priest. The priest himself did not memorize the text but read it. We have already said something about the vulnerability of the Temple and the Torah to attack and destruction by enemies.(24)

If we look at the Gospels, we find that many appeared about a century after Jesus. It was not until 367 A.C. that Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria clamped down on the flexibility of sacred Christian books, canonizing twenty- seven of them into an accepted body of texts.(25) We have no exact information about the date, the provenance and writers of the four canonical

Gospels. Many other gospels were banned and destroyed. Add to this the fact that these officially accepted Gospels were not in any event widely read or known to the public.

It is interesting to note that the passages of the Bible cited in the early writings of the Church Fathers are not always accurately quoted. The Old Testament is referred to about nine hundred time, in the New Testament, including about 250 direct quotations in the earliest books . These quotations are usually inaccurate.[26]

The Qur'an is read as part of Muslim daily prayers, and also as part of the long night prayers of the very pious, Tahajjud. No prayer is accepted without reading from the Qur'an. In fact, the word "prayer" means more or less reading from the Qur'an. The reading from the Qur'an in worship must be in Arabic, and according to the Qur'an order, in chapter and verse, unless the person praying is ignorant or unable to use Arabic.

In that case it is permissible to use any language until Arabic is learned. In Muslim worship there are no hymns, songs, or music of any kind. This is itself helps to preserve the text against change or alteration through forgetfulness or destruction. It also helps develop the skill of recitation among the professional reciters who became a phenomenon in our human history.

Because the Qur'an is read frequently, regularly and widely, and because the reading is itself an act of worship, it preserves its integrity. It would be thus absurd to attempt to cast doubt on its authenticity on the assumption that Qur'an was not mentioned by historians at the time of its origins.[27] Such an argument would be like saying that the Himalyas were not there because early writers do not mention them, or that Egypt is only known to have existed because Herodotus mentions it .

To sum up, one might say that Islam means Qur'an, and Qur'an means Islam.

The Qur'an : orientation to and influence on the Muslim mind.

Memorization of the Qur'an by thousands of Muslims helps sharpen their intellect and their power of memorizing. They achieve great feast of memorizing even before the age of nine years, learning not only sacred texts but also secular texts. There are records of many Muslim scholars who knew Aristotle's texts by heart, and the medical text of Galen, and other such books. It is nothing short of staggering to realize that the Muslim scholar al-Anbari has even memorized the figures in the accounts of the state treasury.

The story goes that a certain small sum was once unaccounted for in the treasury. This scholar was able to tell them from memory where the amount had been entered, and his statement was confirmed as true by investigating the written records.(28)

Another scholar, Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim al - Abdari (d. 626 A.H) memorized all the theories of Euclid including the figures illustrating them.(29)

Ibn Khaldun, a very well known scholar, pioneer sociology, tells us that he memorized the Qur'an, the hadiths, and the saying of ancient Arab men of letters, and the two long poems about the Qur'an written by al Shatbi, and other books of jurisprudence, logic and morality.(30)

Ibn al - Anbari (d .328 A.H) called the "sheikh" of men of letters, used to dictate texts from memory, quoting all the sources as he did so - Dhahabi described him as "unique in all times in his ability to memorize, and in what memorized. Moreover, he was truthful, religious and devoted.(31)

Abu Ali al Qali states that Ibn al Anbari memorized 300,000 verses of Arabic poetry, useful for interpretation of the language of the Qur'an. People noticed that he never dictated from a written source, only from memory. Once he asked how many books he had memorized. He replied "thirteen large boxes full".[32]

Finally, we would like to say that memorizing the Qur'an sharpens the intellect and safeguards the text, preventing slackness and abuse.

More examples can be given here of how the Qur'an works to shape Muslim society, and how Muslims have been greatly concerned with what the Qur'an says. Ibn Abbas memorized all the muhkam when he was 10 years old, during the lifetime of the Prophet.[33] Al Shaaf'i memorized it at the age of seven, or as some say, nine. He memorized the book of Malik in Hadith when he was 10 years old, Al- Shaaf'i himself realized that he had an extraordinary memorized ability. When he was at school and heard the teacher telling another student a verse he memorized it before the other one did.[34] Qatada (61- 118 A.H) memorized the Qur'an and the Hadith, and again he himself realized that this was an exceptional achievement. He said of himself "I have never had to ask any one talking to me to say the same thing twice. And my ears never heard anything without my heart storing it up.[35]

Al -Dani (d. 440 A. H) was one of the most distinguished scholars of the Qur'an and Qur'anic interpretation and Arabic grammar. He says much the same about himself: "I never saw anything without writing it down, and I never wrote anything down without memorizing it, never memorized anything without learning it for ever.[36]

Al Suri (died 410 A.H.) who in his own time was the most

learned man in Muslim tradition, was often occupied in writing the hadith according to al Bajji. Al Suri wrote Al Bukhari Sahih in seven rolls of paper from Baghdad, and he had only one eye. People said of him that he had told them "Give me any hadith and you read the text, I will give you the authority, or vice versa".[37] In other words he had complete knowledge of the hadith. we have a similar story recorded about al Bukhari. Ibn Zuhr, known in the West as Avenzoor the distinguished physician of the middle ages, who died in 1162 A .H, had memorized al Bukhari Sahih, its text and authorities, and Abu Hanifas' book about plants, and Galen's books about medicine and anatomy. It should be noted that Ibn Zuhr's book about medicine called al Taysir was translated into Latin in 1280 A.C. and later into several European languages, and remained a medical reference book for a long time . Moreover Ibn Zuhr was the first to discover stomach cancer.[38] On record we have many other examples.

Ibn Faurrah is we reported to have memorized a camel - load of books.[39] In our time this sounds like a fairy tale or exaggeration, but this is something which I know from personal experience. I myself never have to read a text twice. I memorize it the first time. I can recall a speech or a poem immediately after hearing it once. I memorized the Qur'an at an early age, when I was about nine years old. Our readers may imagine that memorizing like this is merely mechanical, with no understanding or creative ability. This would be a wrong reaction. On the contrary, such people were also critical and creative. They pioneered literary criticism and they laid the foundation of later schools of criticism. Their ideas still hold good in our own time and are still regarded as important and as a point of reference to guide us in our modern attempts at criticism.

The books of al - Tabaqat - "the hierarchy of the learned" al Huffaz dealing with these exceptional memorizers usually introduce or comment on each figure by saying,

"He memorized with understanding. He has great powers of memorizing, great intellect and great creativity". The leading traditionalists say that memorizing and understanding belong together. Mere mechanical repetition is useless as an authority.[40]

It becomes clear that Qur'an is the words of God given to the Prophet Muhammad via the agency of the Archangel Gabriel, and thus to man through the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Qur'an was well safeguarded against corruption and alteration. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic and it has been written down during the life of the Prophet and it is often read in its Arabic language worldwide. The Qur'anic teachings are for all mankind without distinction.

CHAPTER THREE
THE GOSPELS AS INDIVIDUAL BOOKS

The entry under Ibn Hazm in The Encyclopaedia of Islam[1] states that his motive for writing was to reveal the corruption of the Gospels. This suggests that Ibn Hazm's attitudes were coloured by a desire to prove an a priori point. On the contrary, Ibn Hazm's introduction to Al-Fisal is an unambiguous statement of intention to approach his material, not merely as a Muslim dogmatist, but also as an objective historian of religion. He actually criticizes religious writers who, in his view, have failed to achieve positive and unbiased results, and have committed the faults of either prolixity or excessive density and in so doing have done justice neither to their own standpoint nor to their critics. It is absolutely clear from the introduction that Ibn Hazm's studies of religious scholarship led him towards a personal ideal of scholarship which would avoid the weaknesses he noted in other works. This ideal was one of exactitude of objectivity and of the eschewing of a purely dogmatic line of approach. The Encyclopaedia is, thus, not wholly substantiated by the facts.

The basis of Ibn Hazm's comments on the Gospels as individual books, which will be the theme of this chapter is, consequently, characterized by a degree of historical objectivity. His concentration on the Gospels as source material is an historian's choice which he implies is made from lack of material elsewhere when he comments that Josephus's (c.37 - c.100)

account of Jesus was limited. and that "with the exception of the account of John the Baptist on whose activities as a baptizer he passes no comment, Josephus: "did not mention anything else about Jesus, Son of Mary" [2]The fact that Ibn Hazm refers only to Josephus on John the Baptist is, incidentally, an important piece of evidence in support of the view that the passages on James and Jesus are additions of later authorship.[3]

IBN HAZM DEFINITION OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

The author of al-Fisal regards the Four Gospels as four biographical works written by four known men, at different times.[4] emphasizes the biographical nature of the Gospels by introducing each one with the formula "Tarikh Allafahu" meaning "History, written by". The Gospels are not attacked by Ibn Hazm only on the grounds that there are four of them, an argument put forward by R.Arnaldez,[5] but because of discrepancies between the accounts, and lack of credibility, which will be discussed in detail later. For Ibn Hazm the Four Gospels are not inspired, but corrupted books written by four individuals, a viewpoint which he goes on to say, is shared by all Christian sects.[6] Unfortunately his terms are slightly ambiguous, i.e. it is not clear whether he wants to say that all Christians of that date are in agreement about the authorship of the Four Gospels and the entire New Testament collection as traditionally stated, or that the consensus of opinion of Christians is that the Four Gospels are not inspired. If Ibn Hazm intended to say that Christians of the time did not believe in the inspiration of the Gospels, he seems to have been partly wrong, because it was generally held by Christians that the Spirit of God had dictated the Books of the New Testament; several

examples may be quoted to illustrate this. Firstly, the Biblical source often used as a basis for the view of inspiration is to be found in 2. Tim. 3,16 "All scripture is inspired by God", and 2 Pet. 1,21 "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit". Secondly, as Streeter points out the Muratorian fragment which seems to represent the official view of the Roman Church in about A.C. 200, while recognizing distinctions between the Apostles, implies an over-riding inspired source: "It was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify. And therefore, though various elements are taught in the several books of the Gospel, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one guiding Spirit all things are declared in all of them.[7] Thirdly Origen (c.185 - 254A.C.) Gregory of Naziansus (329 - 389 A.C.) believed that the activity of the divine will was discernible in the minutiae of the sacred Books, a reaction with which the Ibn Hazm would disagree.

"There is not one jot or tittle written in the Bible which does not accomplish its special work for those capable of using it".[8] Fourthly,Gregory the Great (c.540 - 606 A.C.) clearly referred to God as the author of the sacred scripture, the human factor in the production of the scripture being called the writer.[9]

In this he was followed by Isidore of Seville (c.560 - 636 A.C.) and Rabanus Maurus (776/84 - 856 A.C.) until the phrase "God the author of scripture" became universal.[10]

Ricoldo (c.1243 - 1320 A.C.) regarded the contradictions between the Gospels are dictated by the Holy Spirit, and thus not

essentially contradictory.[11] Since in other parts of <u>al-Fisal</u> Ibn Hazm explicitly states that Christians regard the Gospels as inspired,[12] it is unlikely that he intended to suggest otherwise in the case mentioned above.

In <u>al-Usul wa al-Furu</u> he clarifies this point:

> "Concerning what is in the Gospels, they assume that they are written by four (writers). Two of them were Apostles, Matthew and John, the others were not. Luke was the disciple of Peter, and Mark. They assume that those (Gospels) had come to them from their writers through an unbroken chain of authority. In their view the writers of the Gospels are infallible, higher in status than prophets".[13]

The Christian theory of inspiration prevailed until the early eighteenth century, but towards the close of that century men began to question many things that had previously been accepted, including the conviction of a divinely inspired corpus of sacred writings; for example in 1784 the German philosopher Leasing published a book significantly entitled "A New Hypothesis Concerning the Evangelists Considered as Purely Human Writers of History",[14] and in harmony with Ibn Hazm's point of view concerning the Gospels. In this context, one point should be kept in mind: modern Biblical and historical study does not consider the Evangelists as historians or biographers in the modern sense, on the basis that the writers of the Gospels had not presented a comprehensive account or record of Jesus' life and ministry.

Dibelius says of the Gospels: "They are not to be compared with biographies. either modern or ancient",[15] and Martin Khler

in his book "The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ" states :

> "We do not possess any sources for a 'life of Jesus' which a historian can accept as reliable and adequate. I repeat: we have no sources for a biography of Jesus of Nazareth which measure up to the standards of contemporary historical science".[16]

The Gospels are not historical books,but they were written rather to awaken faith. Paul Althaus sums it up: "The Gospels are not in the least like historical sources, as the historian understands the term; Evangelists are preachers".[17]

S. J. Xavier Leon-Dufour remarks that nearly everything concerning the life of Jesus comes from the Four Gospels, but these four Books, far from providing a straightforward biography of him "seen, if read carefully to be full of contradictions".[18]The Evangelists paid no regard to Jesus' childhood and early life to such an extent that historians cannot now agree on the exact date of Jesus' birth.

Turning from the question of the authenticity of the Gospels as historical source material to Ibn Hazm's point that they were written at different times by different men, it should be noted that in this matter Ibn Hazm is more correct than the later renowned theologian, al-Shahrastani (C.548 AH= 1153 A.C.) whose text seems to imply some kind of collaborative or collective effort on the part of the four writers: Matthew, Luke, Mark and John came together and each of them wrote a collection which he called the Gospel".[19]

Al-Shahrastani makes a further error in describing the Gospel

writers as "Hawariyyin", Apostles.[20] This is, of course, not the case since as Chrysostom pointed out, "Two write only from among the Apostles, and two from among their followers, (For one that was a disciple of Paul ,and another of Peter, together with Matthew and John,wrote the Gospels)",[21] and also held by Ibn Hazm.[22] Mark and Luke were not among the twelve Apostles "called" by Jesus.

The anomalies between al-Shahrastani's account and that of Ibn Hazm may be explained by their use of different source texts, the former using an Arabic version arranging the Gospels in the following order, Matthew, Luke, Mark and John. [23]

Further evidence of Ibn Hazm's precision in the context of other Muslim writers can be derived from an examination of some errors made by the great historian al-Mas'udi (C. 346 AH = 957 A.C.) who, like al-Shahrastani, regarded the Gospel writers as Apostles," Hawariyyin" and named them as Mark, John, Peter, Paul and Luke.[24] This could partially be explained by the possible existence of an Apocryphal Gospel ascribed to Peter[25] in al-Mas'udi's time, and the possibility that he was including Paul because of the tradition that Mark's Gospel includes Paul's teaching.

IBN HAZM ARRANGEMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Ibn Hazm does not actually use the term "The New Testament" in his writings on Christianity, although it is found in earlier Muslim writings such as those by Ali Ibn Rabban, Al-Tabari,[26] born between (158 and 169 AH=774 and 785A.C.) and Ibn al Nadim (377AH = 987A.C.) who says in Al-Fihrist,"I

asked Yunus the Priest who was learned about the books of the Jews and Christians, and he mentioned to me two collections: Al-Sura al-Atiqa wa Al-sura al-Haditha, meaning the Old and New Testaments.[27]

Ibn Hazm's arrangement of the Books of the New Testament is as follows:

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John
5. Acts
6. Revelations

7, 8 & 9. Three epistles by John, son of Zebedee

10 & 11. Two epistles by Peter

12. Epistle by James, son of Joseph, the carpenter
13. Epistle by Jude, the brother of Jocob

14 & 15. Epistles by Paul, the disciple of Peter.

He describes the text he is using as follows: Matthew,28 leaves in a medium-sized script, Mark, 24 leaves, Luke, as Matthew; John, 24 leaves in a medium-sized script; Acts, 50 leaves in a cramped hand, Revelations, and the seven Catholic Epistles which he describes as canonical, each written either on one or two leaves and in a poor style. The Epistles of Paul contained about 40 leaves "full of blasphemy"[28] as Ibn Hazm remarks.

By parallelling the above list with the current New Testament version, it will be seen that Ibn Hazm's arrangement accords with the current order as far as Acts; and differs from it in the

arrangement of the rest and in the quantity of Paul's letters as follows: he places Revelations before the Catholic Epistles, rather than in the current sequence: 13 Pauline letters, 7 general Epistles, Revelations. Unlike the current version we find the seven Epistles with John's three letters. There are two possible ways of explaining the variation between Ibn Hazm's order and the order adopted in the current version of the Bible.

Firstly, he may have followed one of the New Testament lists current in his own time, such as the list below. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles, (Jacob, Peter, John, Jude), fourteen Epistles of Paul, Revelations.(29) Ibn Hazm's list corresponds to this with the slight difference of Jacob in place of John, and John in place of Jacob, and fifteen, rather than fourteen Pauline Epistles,(30) and the positioning of Revelations immediately after Acts.

On the subject of the number of Pauline Epistles,Ibn Hazm's list includes the Epistle to the Hebrews which has traditionally been ascribed to Paul although it does not bear its author's name. The fifteenth Epistle in Ibn Hazm's list could be the third letter to the Corinthians, to which Paul made reference.(31) Furthermore it is obvious, as B.K. Rattey has pointed out, that the early Church was in possession of numerous documents including Epistles, that those Epistles now deemed canonical were not always judged so, just as some Epistles, for example that of Barnabas enjoyed canonical status for a time.(32) Ibn Hazm does not refer to any Christian texts that fall outside the Canon, although al-Biruni did so, as mentioned elsewhere.(33) He stresses, however, that the Gospels were written by four different men who received their

material from only five persons. Implicit in this emphasis is a query as to why only four of Jesus' followers held the responsibility of transmitting the account of his life. This point is also raised by Chrysostom, "And why can it have been that when there were so many disciples, two write only from among the followers?" (34)

Ibn Hazm's use of the word "canonical" to describe the seven Epistles only is interesting since all the New Testament Books were declared canonical either in 325 A.C. at the Council of Nicaea or in 382 A.C. by a Council held at Rome. The arrangement of Ibn Hazm's text cannot be explained in terms of the chronology of admission to the Canon, since the Epistles of Paul were admitted after the Four Gospels, but before the seven Catholic Epistles and Revelations.(35) His use of the word Canonical to describe the seven Epistles could perhaps be explained as follows. Ibn Hazm does not use the term Catholic anywhere in his writings, not even when speaking of Recared the Visigoth King,(36) (C.601 AH) who established catholicism in Spain in replacement of Arianism. It seems possible that he either used "Canonical" to mean "Catholic"(37) or a scribal error produced "Canonical" for his use of "Catholic". The word "Catholic" was used earlier by al-Mahdi, who, in his debate with Timothy called him "O, Catholicos", which corresponds to the Greek work "Catholikos".(38) Elsewhere Ibn Hazm makes it clear that he is aware of the entire Canon of the scriptures, and does in fact distinguish between the Canonical books and other religious writings on which Christianity draws, his labelling of only seven Epistles as canonical is, then, no indication that he was not conscious of what the term denotes.(39)

It is, of course, possible that the arrangement of the New Testament employed by Ibn Hazm is his own, rather than that of a contemporary list, or only partly based on a contemporary list. Scribal error cannot be discounted, but it should be noted that Ibn Hazm's arrangement has the logic of positioning the Books according to the supposed closeness of their authors to Jesus.

THE TEXT USED BY IBN HAZM

Muslim writers often differ from one another when quoting from the Gospels, there was no standard text in use. Carra de Vaux in the Islamic Encyclopaedia actually identified six different groups of manuscripts, giving some idea of the number of variant texts.(40)Ibn Hazm's text differed from the current version in two ways.

Firstly, there are differences in vocabulary, e.g. "The Lamb of God" which is described as " hamal" in the Arabic version is rendered "kharuf" by Ibn Hazm. Many other examples of this kind will be discussed later. Secondly, Ibn Hazm does not divide his quotations into verses, neither do the chapter divisions he uses correspond to the current scripture.

Available data does not offer any help in identifying which text was used by the author of al-Fisal. Specialist studies have failed to ascertain the origins of the Biblical citations in al-Fisal.(41)

Extra-Canonical Texts

Ibn Hazm, having enumerated the Books of the New Testament, noted that in addition to those books accepted as sacred by Christians, there were other books written by the Patriarchs and Bishops: e.g. the the six oecumenical councils and

all the productions of the minor or local councils,[42] which were important, if not sacred, and which were described individually and in detail by Ibn Khaldun.[43] and Al-Yaqubi, along with the rules for conducting ritual which were put forward by King Recared (C. 601 A.H.) (written wrongly as Zachariah by Ibn Hazm elsewhere).[44] Finally, it should be noted that the author of al-Fisal was acquainted with the Christian martyrology.

Matthew

Ibn Hazm states that Matthew was a tax collector, and one of Jesus' disciples. The author of al-Fisal describes his martyrdom as having been carried out by decapitation,[45] but gives no information as to time and place. There is, in fact, no reliable evidence as to the manner or place of death, from other sources. Following the traditional view Ibn Hazm states that the Gospel of Matthew comes before the other Gospels (or the other New Testament writings) in importance and chronology. He goes on to say that it was written in Hebrew, at Judaea in Al-Sham nine years after the Ascension of Jesus. John, the writer of the fourth Gospel had translated it from Hebrew into Greek. The author of al-Fisal is silent on the subject of when and where this took place.[46] Bearing in mind the general tenor of Ibn Hazm's scholarship the time of nine years after the Ascension will not have been a random choice. It is, however, beyond the scope of this book to conduct a thorough investigation and analysis of the evidence of the dating of Matthew's Gospel, although it instructive to note that of the early Christian writers Irenaeus alone suggests a date of before 68 A.C. for the authorship,[47]although according to a tradition in Eusebius (HEiii. 246) he wrote it before his departure from Palestine into foreign parts, that is to say, much earlier.[48]

Provenance and Language

Ibn Hazm's concern with the texts of the Gospels and their history is determined by his larger argument concerning their validity as sacred books. The subject of provenance will be linked with the subject of language in the following section. Ibn Hazm states that Matthew compiled his Gospel in Hebrew at Judea. This is supported by the tradition, and considerable evidence is available to confirm Ibn Hazm's viewpoint. Irenaeus in his book against Heresies (3.1.1) writes

> "Matthew also published a book of the Gospel among the Hebrews, in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church".(49)

Eusebius in his history (6.25.4) quotes Origen as saying that he had learned that "The first Gospel was written by Matthew, who was once a tax collector, but who afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language"

Augustine in his work on the Agreement of the Evangelists(1.2.4.) writes:

"Of these four it is certain that only Matthew is regarded as having written in the Hebrew language, while the others wrote in Greek" and he says that Mark "followed closely in his footsteps, as his imitator and epitomizer". The Monarchain prologues say in the Argument to Matthew's Gospel: "Just as Matthew from Judaea. Barclay commented on such quotations and others in the following words:

"As we have said, and as we have now seen,

> the tradition of the early Church is clear, consistent and unanimous. It was believed that Matthew wrote the first Gospel, that he wrote it first of all the Gospels and that it was originally written in Hebrew".[50]

Papias' statement about the language of Matthew's Gospel should be noted:

> "Matthew compiled the sayings as oracles in the Aramaic language or a Hebrew dialect and everyone translated or interpreted them as well as he could". [51]

Papias' text indicates that there were several translations of Matthew's Gospel; which text was chosen by the Church is not known. However, some modern scholars have suggested that the writing Papias ascribed to St. Matthew was not in fact the Gospel which now bears his name, but simply a collection of utterances. Nevertheless all the ancient Christian authors such as Eusebius had read Papias' commentary and assumed that he was speaking of a Gospel.[52] Papias' statement, then, must refer to a Gospel, particularly as the same statement is made by all the great early Christian writers. Origen, for example, tells us that Matthew's Gospel was written for believers who had come from Judaism and the same view is held by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius.[53]

Ibn Hazm's understanding of the original language of Matthew's Gospel as Hebrew is thus in agreement with ancient tradition. The question of translation, raised by Papias is also considered by Ibn Hazm,who is more specific, stating that the Apostle John translated the Gospel into Greek.[54] As a contrast Jerome (c.342-420) remarked that Matthew "First wrote a Gospel

of Christ in Judaea and in Hebrew letters and words (literis verbisqu) for the benefit of those of the circumcision who believed. Who afterwards translated it into Greek is not quite certain".[55] Ibn Hazm, however, does not give the date at which this took place. The view that John was the translator is supported by Ibn al - Batriq who dates the original to the reign of the Emperor Claudius and states that it was translated into Greek by John.[56] The modern scholar, Alfred Plummer, noted that certain superscriptions on texts make the point that John, James or Bartholomew could have been responsible for the translation.[57] John could certainly have been responsible for one of the translation referred to by Papias since Matthew preceded him in collecting Jesus' sayings.

The twenty-eight leaves of Ibn Hazm's text, mentioned above, correspond approximately to the current Arabic version of Matthew's Gospel, as do the descriptions of the other books used by Ibn Hazm.

Mark

> Ibn Hazm states that :
>
> "Mark wrote his Gospel 22 years after the Ascension of Jesus and he wrote it in Greek at Antioch, and they said that Peter himself compiled it and handed it over to his student St . Mark, having omitted his name from it; and it contains 24 leaves written in a medium-sized script". [58]

Ibn Hazm puts St. Mark's Gospel immediately after Matthew, which follows the logic of chronology since, according to his comments it was written13 years after Matthew. Modern

scholarship has disputed the priority of Matthew, but there is still a group of scholars who continue to defend the traditional chronology.[59]

Ibn Hazm does not mention Mark as being one of Jesus' disciples, he regarded him only as a pupil of Peter, the Apostle. This view draws on the tradition which confirmed that Mark never encountered Jesus, a tradition supported by St. Papias, writing shortly after 100 A.C. on the authority of John the Presbyter, Irenaus, Clement of Alexandria,Tertullian and Origen. Papias' words are as follows:

> "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were an arrangement of the Lord's Oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them".[60]

Papias' statement is obviously, directly or indirectly, Ibn Hazm's source, although Papias does not mention that Peter wrote the Gospel, but that Mark's name was added to it as its author, but merely associates the two Saints with one another, making it clear that Mark himself presented the Gospel from material that he collected from the sayings of his mentor, the chief Apostle, Peter. Ibn al- Batriq(263-328 AH= 876-940 A.C. provided contradictory arguments as to the authorship of Mark's Gospel,

saying both that Peter wrote down a Gospel during Nero's reign (37-68 A.C.) which he then handed on to Mark, and also that Peter dictated the Gospel to Mark at Rome, and Mark substituted his own name for that of Peter.[61] This is obviously an illogical argument, as pointed out by Abu Zahra.[62]

Ibn Hazm's view is to ascribe the Gospel to Mark, but also to make mention of the theory that Peter was in fact, the author giving the Gospel to Mark. This latter view is advanced by him purely as the assumption of other people, and not as a statement capable of absolute proof.[63] Al- Mas'udi (C.346 A.= 957 A.C.) and Ibn Khaldun (b.732 A.H. = 1332 A.C.), however, definitely state that the Gospel was written in Greek by St. Peter, handed over to Mark and ascribed to him, and that Mark went to Alexandria and preached the Gospel.[64]

Ibn Hazm considers the provenance of manuscript of Mark's Gospel to be Antioch ,[65] an original view never suggested before, made on grounds which can only be inferred. Peter had been in Antioch and, according to tradition, became its first Bishop, information which might have formed the basis of Ibn Hazm's point.[66] The author of al-Fisal dates the writing of Mark's Gospel as 22 years after Jesus' Ascension,[67] differing from Abd Allah al-Tarjuman who states that it was written 27 years after the Ascension;[68] he does not, however, explain why he fixed it at this, the earliest possible date at which the Gospel was written.

Luke

Ibn Hazm states that Luke was Antiochene Syrian doctor, and a student and a fellow of St. Paul, but that he was not an

Apostle of Jesus.[69] His statement is absolutely correct and supported both by internal and external evidence. Luke is actually called "our most dear physician" by Peter (col 4:14) and the vocabulary of the third Gospel and of Acts also seems to justify [70] this profession. Some modern scholars have, in fact, argued that evidence of medical knowledge in Luke's Gospel and Acts supports this view.[71]

The earliest authority for Luke's being a doctor is recorded in the Muratorian Canon, which, as Barclay pointed out: "represents the view of the Church in Rome about 170 A.C."

Eusebius made the following statement: "Luke, being by birth one of the people of Antioch, and by profession a physician, having been with Paul a good deal, and having associated himself intimately with the rest of the Apostles, has left us examples of the art of curing souls that he obtained from them in two divinely inspired books".[72] This appeared in the prologue of the Gospel according to Luke, which has survived in Greek in a single manuscript.[73]

Ibn Hazm described Luke's Gospel in the manuscript he used as being written in Greek, and of the same number of leaves as Matthew, i. e . 28. The author of al-Fisal mentions Achaea as the provenance of Luke's Gospel,[74] a view supported by the prologue to the Greek manuscript, although it is not clear whether or not this was the text to which Ibn Hazm himself had access. Other scholars and commentators have reiterated Achaea as the place of composition; Jerome, in his commentary on Matthew and the document known as the Monarchian Prologue to Luke mentions Achae,[75] as does Ricoldo of Montecrice, (1243-1320

A.C.), who according to Sweetman, held that Luke wrote in Greek at Achaea.[76] Barclay regards such statements, external to the prologue itself, as at best "no more than a development of the belief that Luke wrote primarily for the Greeks.[77] Nevertheless, Ibn Hazm's statement regarding provenance should be seen as proof of his comprehensive knowledge of the early traditions of the Church, and although he had access to the Greek prologue he may have based his statement on the Christian belief that Luke was buried in Achaea.

Ibn Hazm does not mention a specific date of composition; following Luke he merely says that it was written some time after Mark recorded his, i.e. some time later than 22 years after the Ascension,[78] again differing from al-Tarjuman who says that it was written 30 by years after the Ascension.[79]

Ibn Hazm has no hesitation in considering that Acts was also written by Luke, despite the fact that neither of these works bears their author's name; in this respect he follows Christian tradition and differs from Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Al-Amiri (d.381 A.H. = 991 A.C.) who considered Peter to be the author of Acts,[80] Al Amiri may, however, have been referring to one of the earliest and best- known apocryphal Books, the Acts of St. Peter, mistakenly inserting it in the Canon. Ibn Hazm provides no information as to the dating or provenance of Acts.

Finally, it should be noted that Ibn Hazm's criticism of Luke's Gospel as not begin divinely inspired draws on the prologue, interpreting it as evidence that the author was merely man who wrote the story of Jesus.[81]

John

Ibn Hazm states that the writer of the fourth Gospel is one and the same as the writer of Revelations, two Epistles, and the translation of St. Matthew. The personal details he gives of John the man are brief: he states that he was the son of Zebedee, wirtten as Sizay, or according to some manuscripts, Sibithi.[82] doubtless as a scribal error, he was an Apostle of Jesus, wrote his Gospel in Asia, and thus must have there, and was martyred by poison..[83]

Ibn Hazm describes his text as contained on 24 leaves and written in a medium-sized hand. He reserves his harshest criticism for this Gospel, considering it to be the most distorted, and full of blasphemy and internal contradiction . He views the Gospel as mere biography, written more than 60 years after the Ascension. There is, in fact, a large body of criticism, from different schools of thought, directed towards the text of John's Gospel, but it is not the task of this book to attempt an analysis of such criticism.

Ibn Hazm describes John's Gospel as written in Greek at Ashinia, undoubtedly a scribal error for "Asia" or Ephesus.[84] Some Christian scholars support the author under discussion on this point; C.K. Barrett, for example, refers to Eusebius who quotes Irenaeus as saying "And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in Asia bear witness that John delivered it (the Gospel) to them. For he remained among them until the time of Trajan." Irenaeus confirms the above statement by remarking that: "But the Church in Ephesus also, which was founded by Paul, and where John remained until the time of

Trajan, is a faithful witness of the apostolic tradition.".[85]

Bar- Hebraeus remarks that John "wrote a Gospel in Greek at the request of the sons of Asia. And Eusebius says that Peter and Paul came to him to Ephesus and persuaded him to write. And there are in it eight miracles and five parables and fifteen testimonies"..[86]

On the subject of dating Ibn Hazm gives 60 years after the Ascension as the earliest possible date of composition, doubtless allowing for John's travels to Asia,and taking into account the light of the differences between the fourth Gospel and the other three in the light of the development of Christianity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ibn Hazm presents an accurate account of the New Testament books showing his ability for the task to which he addresses himself and a scholarly concern to describe his source material. As a historian he is at pains to account for, with exactness, the texts he is investigating; he is also keen to furnish evidence of the lack of any sound Isnads, unbroken chains of authorities, in the Christian scriptures. This explains his emphasis on the authorship, language, date of composition and provenance of the Four Gospels. If they were written by four different men, in different places, and at different times - which all postdate the Ascension of Jesus - and were preserved in two languages they show little evidence of Isnad i.e. transmitting the text by a chain of authorities going back to Jesus without a break, as in the case of the Islamic traditions..[87] This last point represents the general Muslim view of Christian Gospels.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRED TEXTS AND THE QUESTION OF CORRUPTION

By way of a preface, in this chapter we will discuss the Gospel of Jesus, in which Muslims believe, and its relation with the four Christian Gospels, and the provenance of the Christian sacred texts. The Muslims' claim that the Christian texts have been corrupted will be examined in the light of both Islamic and Christian traditions, and the texts themselves will be subjected to critical analysis. It needs no stressing that Muslims believe in the "Gospel". It is referred to many times in the Qur'an. The Prophet Muhammad himself mentioned it several times. The Qur'an mentions the Gospel with the same reverence as other holy texts. It is regarded as a source of light and guidance. The Qur'an also speaks of the "Gospel" in connection with Jesus and the message he brought from God, and how his followers were instructed to act in accordance with it. The Gospel as understood by the Muslims is a heavenly book which God revealed to Jesus, commanding him to deliver its message to the people at a certain time in a certain place. To acknowledge the existence of this heavenly Gospel means, in other words, that Jesus was a prophet. The Qur'an mentions many other prophets by name, and states that God has sent others as well whose names were not known to His prophet Muhammad. But God does not mention books revealed by Him to these unnamed prophets. Only five revealed books are mentioned in the Qur'an. The Gospel is one of them. What the Christians now hold in their hands is not the Gospel to which the Qur'an refers, but they do contain parts of that text, which according to the Qur'an is lost, and according to Christians

did not exist as such. The meaning of the word Gospel will be examined in this chapter, in order to prove that the word can be applied to the lost "Gospel" as a written text. It is important to understand that "Gospel" in this context means this work and not the usual four Christian Gospels.

I am fully aware that the English word Gospel originally meant "good news" as the Qur'an originally meant "recitation" but in both cases they referred to an actual written text.

In this chapter reference will be made to the idea of the possible location of the Gospel of Jesus in which Muslims believe. As a sideline to our discussion, I may perhaps refer here to Jesus' statement that he came not to destroy the Torah but to fulfill it. This implies that he carried something which would supplement the Jewish text. This view will be supported by the many quotations from the Bible in this chapter. Now we turn our attention to the transmission of the Bible and the question of the corruption that the four Gospels have undergone.

In the beginning it should be remembered that the Qur'an depicted Jesus as a great prophet and messenger of God, who was one of the long line of prophets who had been sent to the people of the world. He was a messenger whose guidance and teachings were a reaffirmation and extension of the guidance which had been brought by the prophets who preceded him, and were a preparation for the guidance which the prophet coming after him would bring. As an illustration, the following verses from the Qur'an may be quoted:

> "And we gave to Moses the Book, and after him sent succeeding Messengers; and We gave Jesus son of Mary the clear signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit".(1)

The Qur'an recognizes several biblical figures as prophets, among whom Jesus stands as an equal:

> "Say, we believe in God, and that which has been sent down on us, and sent down on Abraham, Ismael, Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and the prophets of their Lord; we make no division - between any of them, and to Him we surrender".(2)

In the view of the above-mentioned examples the revelation of God had continuously come to His prophets, the long chain of messengers was connected to the same divine source, and Jesus was not distinguished from the rest of the prophets who successively taught the truth to the people. There are several Muslim traditions, Hadiths, which corroborate the Qur'anic view of Jesus as prophet.(3)

The Christian scriptures consisted of the Jewish scriptures until the second-century recognition of the New Testament as inspired. The Jewish scriptures were, however, felt to be a Christian book which spoke of Jesus as a saviour on every page.(4) This Christian view of the Jewish scriptures was later criticized by Ibn Hazm. The Jewish sacred books are mentioned in the Qur'an generally under the title of the Torah; this constituted the five books of Moses, the so-called pentateuch or the law, which is the origin and corner-stone of the Hebrew Bible.(5) However, Ibn Taymiyya states that the Jews use the title Torah to refer to the whole of their Bible.(6) In the Qur'an it is clear that Torah refers to the five books of Moses, since the book of David is mentioned additionally to the Torah as Zabur, the Psalter.

Ibn Hazm together with several Muslim theologians argued convincingly, if bitterly, against the authorship and sanctity of the Jewish scriptures.(7)

The Injil, The Gospel

In the Qur'an, the revelation given especially to Jesus and associated with Him is known as al-Injil, the Gospel. Qur'anic commentators and philologists are not in agreement about the etymology of the word Injil. Abd Allah b. Muslim b. Qutayba understood Injil as deriving from the Ifil form 'to appear', 'to draw out', thus connecting the world Injil itself with the meaning of the word Tahrif which suggests the disappearance of truth. Tahrif thus causes many features of the truth to vanish while Injil brings it into view. This critic suggests that as the People of the Books altered the truth, and as Muslims were ignorant of what they were doing Allah declared the truth in the Gospel, Injil, some of them held that it is Arabic in origin, coming either from the word 'Najl' i.e. 'source' or 'origin'; or from 'Najaltu'; the verb "of draw out".(8) Others maintain that it is a non-Arabic word which was transcribed into Arabic.(9)

Ahmad Shakir says that the word is Greek in origin, meaning good news.(10) There are two views about the arrival of the word into Arabic. Firstly, that it came from Syria;(11) secondly from the Ethiopian "wangle". Geoffrey Parrinder pointed out that the word wangle has a long vowel like Injil and this suggested that the word was brought over by Abyssinian Christians,(12) and it was probably in widespread use in Arabia before Muhammad's time.(13) The word Injil occurs twelve times in the Qur'an: 3:2, 48, 65, 5:46, 47, 66, 68, 110; 7:157, 9:111; 48:29; 57:27, 19, 30, 31. These verses show that the Qur'an states that Jesus was given the Injil, a single Gospel, together with all the truths preserved in the revealed Books, the Torah and the Wisdom.

Ibn Ishaq in his book Sirat al-Nabi, Muhammad's biography, remarks that the Gospel contains what Jesus brought in confirmation of Moses, and of the Torah, which Moses brought from God.(14)

Ibn Ishaq generally reflects the Islamic point of view of the single Gospel bestowed on Jesus. Ibn Kathir states that the Injil was sent down upon Jesus, son of Mary in the nineteenth night of Ramadan on the mountain of Sira.(15) It should be mentioned that some of the apocryphal epistles held that Jesus brought a book from heaven which he transmitted or revealed to his disciples.(16) Moreover the Apocalypse of St. Peter states: "And I rejoiced and believed and understood that which is written in the book of my Lord Jesus Christ".(17) and the author of the Gospel of St. Barnabas, says that the Injil was revealed to Jesus on the Mount of Olives.(18) However, the orthodox Muslim view ascribes the Gospel, the Torah and the Qur'an to the same divine source, regarding them as declaring the truth and giving guidance to mankind. In this context one point should be kept in mind: that, as the illustrious Qur'anic commentator Al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 AH) states, all the sacred documents are called the Furqan, i.e. proof or evidence, as well as the Qur'an. The Qur'an claims to be a confirmation, protector and touchstone of the truth contained in the Torah and the Gospel.(19)

The relationship between the Qur'an and the Christian scriptures as understood by Christians and Muslims can be focussed by reference to a single Qur'anic verse and a comparison of the ways in which it has been understood by both sides. From the Christian viewpoint, which is, in fact, an adoption of one method of interpreting the verse; the verse reads as follows:

> "So, if thou art in doubt regarding what
> we have sent down to thee, ask those

> who recite the Book before thee. The truth has come to thee from thy Lord; so be not of the doubters".[20]

Ricoldo comments that this means "Those who had read the Book before the Saracens were the Jews and the Christians, who had in their hands the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament, and the Gospel, as Muhammad explains. And so he tells the Saracense (the Muslims) to enquire from Christians and Jews about anything ambiguous... and so in the time of Muhammad the Books of the Christians and Jews were not corrupted, it is also not possible to say that they were corrupted afterwards".[21]

The question of corruption will be dealt with later, but this quotation clearly illustrates the way in which Christians have taken the verse as an absolute Qur'anic testimony of the soundness of the scriptures in their hands. The modern scholar, Parrinder, follows Ricoldo in interpreting the verse as a command to confer with the people who had received the scriptures earlier.[22]

Ibn Hazm's contemporary, the Jewish scholar Ibn al Nighrila understood the verse to signify that Muhammad doubted God, or the truthfulness of the revelation given to him. The Muslim point of view can be demonstrated by reference to Ibn Hazm, Ibn Taymiyya and some other Muslim scholars. Ibn Hazm provides an interpretation of the verse in question and then answers his critic polemically. It is the author of al-Fisal's exegesis which is of prime interest here: it involves Ibn Hazm in an interpretation which at first sight seems to move outside the literalist theory to which he was committed, but in fact it does not go beyond his own definition of the Zahiriyya position. The rejection of exegesis, Ta'wil, is not an outright rejection and permits its use

when necessary in considering certain Qur'anic passages and when it can be supported by scriptural evidence.

Ibn Hazm insists that the interpretation exemplified by Ricoldo above originates with the People of the Books, i.e. Christians and Jews, and with some others. Those who suppose to be Muslims could never share such a view. It is impossible that a Muslim should think that Muhammad doubted the revelation from God. Ibn Hazm refers to an essay which he himself wrote on this subject;(23) this unfortunately does not appear among his writings, and was clearly not included as a section of al-Fisal. Ibn Hazm, however, summarizes the argument of the essay in his comment on this verse. The confusion can be solved as follows: the world "In" translated into English as"If", is synonymous with the conjunction"Ma"which signifies refusal and denial. The verse thus reads not "if you are in doubt", but "you are not in doubt".(24) The author of al-Fisal continues by saying that God commanded Muhammad to confer with the People of the Books to confirm their knowledge of Muhammad as a Prophet sent from God, as corroborated in the Torah and the Gospel.(25) Ibn Hazm, as shown above, uses linguistic analysis in order to resolve the problem of a difficult verse, and in doing so follows a method of resolving its particular difficulties which was not unique to him. Al-Tabari and others had, in fact, reviewed a range of solutions to this verse of which Ibn Hazm's constituted only one of many possibilities. Any judgement of his argument needs to be placed against the alternative solutions described by Al-Tabari.

Al-Tabari comments on the verse: "God says to his Prophet Muhammad, 'if you are in doubt about the truthfulness of what We told you in revelations - that the children of Israel had not differed concerning your prophethood before you were sent by God as an apostle to His people, for they found you prophecied in

their scripture, and they knew you from the description of you given in the Torah and Injil - you must confer with those who read the sacred book before you, that is, the people of the Torah and the people of the Gospel, such as 'Abd Allah Ibn Sallam and those who, like him, were honest and had faith in you: do not ask those who are dishonest or are unbelievers".[26]

Al-Tabari reported Ibn Abbas as saying that the book referred to in the verse was the Torah and the Gospel; the people with whom Muhammad was commanded to confer were those who lived in Muhammad's time and believed in him. The Prophet was to turn to them if questions as to the foretelling of his own prophethood in those books arose. The only object of possible doubt was then Muhammad himself, and the people with whom he was to confer were restricted to those who believed in his mission. Furthermore, Muhammad had been prophecied in the scriptures - Jewish and Christian - but these prophecies had been denied by the majority of Jews and Christians except for those who had come to accept that such prophecies were truthful and had become Muslim.

Al-Tabari continues by saying: "If anybody asks, 'was the Prophet of God in doubt concerning the reality of God's telling?' the answer must emphatically be 'no'.[27] Al-Tabari's discussion is lengthy, and some of the points he makes arise in Ibn Taymiyya's contribution to the same issue - it is, however, essential to take note of one particular statement made by him:

> "the expression 'if you doubt', does not make it necessary that Muhammad doubted. (From the linguistic point of view) Arabs use such expressions, e.g. the master might say to his servant: 'If you are my servant you must do such

> and such' when the master has no real doubt at all that the servant addressed *is* his servant. Similarly an Arab might say to his son: 'If you are my son you will be kind to me'.(28)

Al-Tabari does not merely refer to colloquial use of the expression in everyday life but draws an example from the Quran: God asked Jesus whether Jesus had told the people: "take me and my mother as Gods, apart from God",(29) knowing full well that he had never done so. Thus the expression, as Al-Tabari makes clear, is nothing more than a rhetorical device. He concludes his argument by stating that it was only natural that Allah should have talked to Muhammad in phraseology appropriate to the Arabs in whose language the Qur'an itself was revealed.(30)

Al-Nisaburi Al-Thaalibi's (d. 427 AH) Tafsir stresses the semantic significance of the conditional: the expression "If you are in doubt" does not in any way prove either the existence or non-existence of the conditional matter; the same exegete, moreover, saw in this verse a clear proof of the fact that the People of the Books had firm knowledge of the truthfulness of the Qur'an to the extent that they were in a position to argue even with Muhammad himself on the subject of his prophethood and he concludes:

> "The verse thus describes the Rabbis' deep knowledge of the authenticity of what God revealed to Muhammad; the verse does not describe the Prophet as having doubted".(31)

The same Mufassir supported his argument by reference to the tradition that Muhammad commented on the manner in which he

received this passage: "I neither doubt nor question, but testify that this is the truth". Al-Nisaburi's argument agrees in general with that of Ibn Hazm. He points out that In Nafiya is a particle of negation which could mean: "you are not in doubt", adding: "It is said moreover that the verse addressed any hearer who might have been in some doubt, and the people who might have doubted were Muslims converted from a Jewish or Christian stock".(32)

Al-Qurtubi's comment on the verse is to argue that it speaks to the Prophet not as an object of doubt, but as a medium through which people are commanded to ask for confirmation if they have doubts. Furthermore he mentions that Thalab and Al-Mubarrad had been ascribed with having said that the verse referred specifically to pagan Arabs, its meaning thus being that if such pagans were in doubt about the Qur'an they should ask Muslims who had been converted from Judaism, whom they regarded as being more knowledgeable than themselves, to corroborate the veracity of the Qur'an.(33) Such an interpretation is feasible, it does however contradict Muhammad's response to the verse as reported in the tradition referred to by Al-Nisaburi. Ibn Hazm's interpretation too, does not take account of this tradition and for this reason is unacceptable to the present author as being an insufficient exegesis.

A preferable interpretation is that which stresses the conditional nature of the statement as being no evidence that either Muhammad or his followers doubted God's revelation; and which understands the people referred to in the above verse as converted Muslims.

Ibn Taymiyya seeks an answer to the problem of the verse by considering Muhammad's traditionally related statement of acceptance, and by concluding that the verse insists that Jews and

Christians were in possession of confirmation of Muhammad's message. Ibn Taymiyya shows himself concerned to analyze precisely what issues were to be referred to the People of the Books. Firstly, Muhammad was to ask the Jews about the way in which their scriptures confirm the warning against polytheism given by Moses and the prophets to the people (Qur'an 43:45; 21:25; 16:13). Secondly, Muhammad was to ask the Jews to confirm that God appointed men, not angels as prophets of his message (Qur'an17:95; 23:25; 10:1-2; 6:8-9; 21:7-8). Thirdly, the People of the Books were to be asked about the work of the prophets among men, and the consequences of rejecting or accepting the prophets. Fourthly, they were to be asked about the common religion, i.e. Islam, the total devotion to the will of God as the fundamental source of all religions. This constituted monotheism, and injunctions that the people should be trustworthy, just and devoted to parents and relatives. Fifthly, the People of the Books should be asked whether Muhammad's message was in accordance with the previous prophets, and about the nature of Muhammad's prophesy (Qur'an 7:156-157; 61:6).[34] It is clear from the above that Ibn Taymiyya seeks for common ground between the three religions, however Ibn Taymiyya qualifies this by insisting that the passage in the Qur'an in no way sanctions Christian practices and doctrines which have been invented and added to Jesus' original teachings, such as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Moving from the reference to the People of the Books in the Qur'anic verse cited above to the more general question of the relationship between the Qur'an and the Gospels, Geoffrey Parrinder has remarked that: "There is no suggestion in the Qur'an that the Gospel given to Jesus was different from the canonical Gospels held by Christians. This is a matter of importance, in view of later Muslim polemic. Indeed the Qur'an

enjoins 'the people of the Gospel' to judge by what God has sent down therein (5:51-47). It speaks of 'the Gospel in their possession (7:156-157) and urges them to follow the messenger spoken of in it. The Qur'an itself is sent down to confirm the Book which was before it, and to act as a protector over it"(35)(5:52-48). Ibn Hazm has his own interpretation of these verses as will be shown later. Such a statement, which makes no distinction between the Gospel revealed to Jesus and the canonical Gospels is quite wrong, for several reasons: Firstly, all the verses referred to above speak of the Gospel as a single one, behind which there is a divine origin, but not of four variant Gospels by four different writers of four different dates, nor of twenty seven books, i.e. the New Testament collection admitted later by the Church. One particular line of argument should be forestalled here. It may be argued that although the Qur'an uses 'Injil' in the sense of a single book, it could however imply the four Gospels on the basis of understanding the five books of the Torah in the word 'Torah' or the one hundred and fourteen chapters of the Qur'an in the word 'Qur'an'. Such a supposition could be supported on the basis that when the Qur'an refers to the Gospel, 'Injil', it often refers to information present in the four canonical Gospels; for example, Jesus' miraculous birth. Three major objections can be raised to such an interpretation of 'Injil'. Firstly, although by 'Injil the Qur'an means a book which, like the Torah and the Qur'an itself, was revealed from God; Christians do not understand 'Gospel' in this way, they believe that God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ, and in four inspired Gospels, as mentioned elsewhere. Muslims object to this. Secondly, several Gospels were excluded from the canon(36) which established which Gospels were inspired. What then should be the attitude to these excluded Gospels, which support Muslim tradition in several instances, such as Mary's dedication

to the temple, causing clay sparrows to fly,(37) and Jesus' having received a book from heaven? Thirdly, the Qur'an specifies that the 'Injil' was revealed to Jesus but the four Gospels were written by four different men, and even if they are accepted as having been revealed, the question of their revelation to four different men rather than to Jesus Himself remains unanswered.

It could be argued in conclusion that wherever the Qur'an speaks of the Gospel in the singular, it refers to that 'Injil' in which Muslims believe. When the Qur'an charges the Christians with corruption it refers to the four canonical Gospels, in which the words of Jesus are mixed with the human speculations and errors of their four authors.

The second objection to be raised to Parrinder's statement is that the exact contents of the Gospel are not indicated in the Qur'an, with one exception, this being the prophecy about Muhammad, his followers, and the Christian denial of him. (Qur'an 48:29). Thirdly, the figure of Jesus is depicted in the Qur'an as a messenger and a word of God (not in the Christian sense), but in the extant Gospels he is regarded as a Lamb of God,(38) Son of God(39) and Word of God,(40) "which became flesh", all of which are rejected by Muslims, as will be discussed later. Fourthly, while Muslims do not deny Jesus and the Gospel, which are a part of their faith.(41) they generally say that Muhammad was foretold by name in the Torah and the Gospel.(42) Christians deny this foretelling, although Ibn Hazm insists that if they observe the Gospel correctly they must recognize Muhammad as a Prophet.

The consensus of Muslim opinion is that the Qur'anic verses refer not to the four current Gospels, but to the Gospel revealed to Jesus by God: in this matter Ibn Hazm's view is in line with Islamic tradition - he too considers that the Gospel revealed to

Jesus no longer exists in full, but that a few portions of it have been included in the four current Gospels as will be discussed in depth later. Rahmat Allah, quoting from Al-Qurtubi's Al -Ilam bima Ind al-Nasara Min al Fasad Wa al Awham, writes:

> "the book which is in the hands of the Christians and which they call the Injil is not that of which Allah says: 'And He has sent down the Torah and the Injil etc'.(43)

Ibn Taymiyya(44) and the author of Al-Muntakhab al-Jalil(45) both support the position above, while the writer of the footnotes to Izhar al Haqq clarifies the outline of the Muslim attitude towards this issue in his comment on Sura 5:46 "The correct conclusion is that the Qur'an gives its witness to the Injil and Torah which are empty of corruption, but the corrupted forms are not included in this witness. When Muslims take evidence from these scriptures they refer only to what appears to be genuine; when they attack them it is only the corrupted forms that they attack. God forbids that Muslims should believe that the Torah and the Gospel are False, the corrupted forms alone are so".(46)

In order to develop the argument raised by Ibn Hazm on the subject of the Gospels, the Christian view of the Gospel should be stated. St. Athanasius describes the concept of revelation through Jesus as follows:: "The word has been manifested in a body or Jesus; the Lord used a human body to manifest the truth and knowledge of the Father".(47)

The conception of revelation from the Christian point of view is not merely related to, but based upon the doctrine of the Trinity, as indicated by Ignatius, who describes Christ as "The unlying mouth by which the Father spoke truly 'as our God' and as 'God incarnate' ".(48)

Since the conception of the Gospel stands as a matter of sharp difference between Christians and Muslims, an investigation of the etymology and theology of the word 'Gospel' is required. 'Gospel' is the modern form of the Anglo-Saxon word 'godspell', representing the Greek word (   ) which came to mean the reward of a man who brought 'good news'. Later it came to refer to the good news itself. It then came to be applied to the good news proclaimed by and centering in Jesus, and this is the New Testament usage, as Hunter points out. Later still it was applied to canonical 'memoirs' of Christ.(49) The word also refers to the four Gospels. Justin Martyr (c. 152 A.C.) who gave the Gospels their names also called them "memoirs of the Apostles".(50) In view of the above the word evangelion denotes the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, including glad tidings about Jesus Himself.(51) Moreover it refers to a written account of the life of Jesus as preserved in the four Gospels.(52) The word Gospel implies the utterances of Jesus, the teachings that he taught His disciples, and which he ascribed wholly to God. If this be the case, then the utterances and the teachings of Jesus would be the Injil, the Gospel or the surviving part of it to which the Qur'an refers, and upon which the consensus of Muslim opinion is agreed. This aspect will be dealt with later.

Theoretically, the Gospel means Jesus Himself. Concerning the Prologue of John, C.K. Barrett comments:

> "He begins with Christ, the eschatological fulfilment of God's purposes, and with the fundamental conviction that Christ Himself is the Gospel, the word which God has spoken".(53)

Thus the definition of the Gospel is intimately linked with the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation.

A Christian writer, Ibrahim Luqa, says that "Jesus had not received a book from heaven but he Himself had prepared his teachings and preached them to the people. He neither received this teaching himself, nor arranged for it to be written, but he transmitted it orally to his selected Apostles whom he sent to many different areas to proclaim his message and to teach other people. In this sense they are regarded as his Apostles. Jesus promised them before he departed from them that he would not leave them as orphans but he would send the Holy Spirit to them to teach them everything and to remind them what he had said to them.[54] The same writer goes on to say that this promise was fulfilled at Pentecost on the fiftieth day after the ascension. Thus the four Gospels were written from four different points of view "Yet the Gospels are one that bear four faces and not four distinct Gospels as Muslims thought".[55]

It is worth noting that the last passage in the above quotation seems to apply the ambiguity in number of the Christian Trinity to the Gospels.

However, M.H. Abd al-Aziz argues for the validity of the Muslim belief in a single divine book, referring to many passages in the evangelists which mention 'a Gospel', or 'the Gospel'.[56] The flaw in Abd al-Aziz's argument is his understanding of 'the Gospel' as indicating a single book.

A Christian writer, W. Cantwell Smith, regarded the Muslim view as a misinterpretation of the Gospel, an error which should be recognized by Christians and historians of religion. "For Muslims to say that Jesus brought the Injil is as though Christians were to say of Muhammad that he brought the Sahihan or al-Kutub al-Sittah".[57] The above remark suggests that the parallel is to be drawn between the four Gospels and Islamic tradition, rather than the Qur'an and the four Gospels, on the basis

that both writings are considered to be records of the sayings and events of Jesus and Muhammad which were collected and written by the disciples of the two men. Muslims would accept comparing their Tradition with the four Gospels, but they attach more authenticity to the Hadith 'Tradition' than the four Gospels.(58) It should be noted that Muslims claim to be just as cautious in accepting the Tradition as do some free-thinking Christians with regard to their scriptures. Muslims possess what they call Isnad, an uninterrupted chain of authorities on which a Tradition is based, i.e. one must know the time and the place at which the passage was uttered, the people who first heard and narrated it, the people who transmitted it person to person from the Prophet Muhammad down to the Hafiz or the last narrator. Everything concerning the Tradition is well-examined. Ibn Hazm regards this meticulous method as a means of authenticating Tradition, and one of the unique privileges of Islam, which according to him, is not to be found in other religions.(59) The question of how the Christian Tradition was transmitted and corrupted will be treated later.

Ibn Hazm is fully aware that unlike the Jewish belief in The Law, Christians do not consider their Gospels to be sent from heaven.

His standpoint that the Gospels are neither revealed nor inspired is supported by numerous examples as is shown throughout this book. Nevertheless he argues for the existence of the Injil, the Gospel in which Muslims believe. He refers to Mark 16, 15-18 in which Jesus commanded his disciples to go out into the world and preach the Gospel for all nations, regarding this command as indicating a Gospel brought to them by Jesus from God. This Gospel, according to Ibn Hazm, is no longer in the possession of the Christians; instead they have four Gospels

written by four authors a long time after Jesus' ascension. Thus the Gospel to which Jesus referred was lost. Ibn Taymiyya considers that this Gospel was in existence during Muhammad's lifetime, although other writers hold that it was destroyed earlier; the question of how it was destroyed will be discussed in the context of the corruption.

Ibn Hazm builds up a body of references which support his conception of the Injil. He refers to John 8.26 ff: "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: how be it that he sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto you the world ... I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me". Ibn Hazm regards this as Jesus' declaration of himself as a man who transmitted God's word.(60) The implication of Ibn Hazm's comment is that the things taught to Jesus by God, and entrusted to Jesus constitute the revelation or Injil. This "revelation" differs of course from the Christian view of revelation as God revealing Himself through Jesus. He strengthens his argument by drawing on Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus which states; "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased". Matthew 12:18 and Isiah 1:42, and which he understands as conclusive proof that Jesus was a prophet and servant of God. If Jesus were a prophet he must have received a revelation from God in the shape of words which he was required to transmit, and this is clearly indicated in John 12:49-50 "For I speak not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak". Jesus' role as a prophetic instrument is unambiguous here.(61)

Whenever Ibn Hazm speaks of Jesus as a prophet he implies the existence of the Injil. Developing his line of thought reference could be made to John 7.16, where Jesus replied to the Jews amazement at his learning by saying: "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me". Here Jesus explicitly drew attention to the fact that his learning was not the result of human efforts, but had been taught him by God. This is in harmony with the Qur'an 3:48: "He will teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah, the Gospel, to be a messenger to the children of Israel"; and 5:117 "I only said to them what Thou didst command me". Furthermore John assigns the following words to Jesus: "for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them." (John 17:8), and also describes himself as "a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God" (John 8:40). Jesus here defines himself as a man and prophet who received and transmitted the words of God, not as an emanation from God, nor as God incarnate is it in no way God can be called man or prophet.(62) Jesus describes his utterances as God's speech Kalamu Allah; the term used to describe the Qur'an and all the revealed books.(63)

This argument for Jesus' prophethood explained above could be criticized on the basis of a difficult problem that it naturally raises. All the prophets of the past introduced God's message with the Formula "Thus speaks Yahwah",(64) or like Muhammad use the Formula "God says" which introduces God's speech in the Qur'an. If Jesus had received a revelation which Muslims unhesitatingly call the Injil why, it could be asked, does he use the form "I say", as if he speaks on his own authority?(65) Could this be a sign that Jesus' person occupies the position or role of God in the Old Testament? It is a paradox that although Jesus ascribed what he said wholly to God as indicated above, he differs from all other prophets by using unconventional Formula

with which to introduce his message. There are two possible solutions to this difficulty. Firstly it could be argued that Jesus adopts a style peculiar to himself. When he refers to the Torah or to other Old Testament books he introduces them by saying "It is written in the book" or "in the Law", or "Moses wrote about me" etc. (John 8:55), when it is generally established that the Torah is from God. Thus Jesus makes use of a personal style whether he is referring to the Old Testament or when he is indicating his own particular message.

Secondly, it could be argued that the personal pronoun was put in place of the usual prophetic Formula by the evangelists who wished to herald Jesus as God.

The Question of Corruption

The question of corruption of biblical texts is a major bone of contention among the three communities, Jews, Christians and Muslims. A great deal has been written about it throughout the centuries; even before Islam, the Texts have been attacked because of inconsistencies, errors and contradictions in them. There has always been heated discussion about this topic. The People of the Books always ask how God's message can be corrupt? Can Allah's Word fail? When did the corruption take place? Who is responsible for it? We shall address this question in this chapter, but first there is something that I should like to point out. Different arguments on the subject of corruption have helped the development of the sciences of textual criticism, the study of comparative religion, interfaith studies, oriental studies and so on. This in itself has given rise to specialist departments in the universities, where scholars defend their own position and try to shake their opponents position. As I have mentioned earlier modern biblical criticism gives support to the Muslim claim of

corruption. Jews and Christians need to reconsider their position in the light of the Muslim arguments. Why, for example, if the Torah was corrupt, did Jesus not mention its shortcomings? As a prophet he could not use a false text and quote from it. There is an ingenious objection; one could say that the prophet cannot deal with everything. Jesus came for a special purpose and with a special message. John the Baptist, for example, came to warn people and to command them to repent, in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of God. That was his sole function. Lut came only to attack the homosexuality practised by his people, and nothing else. Jesus himself made it clear that the paraclete, another being like himself, would come after him and tell them what he himself could not. This means that Jesus did not say everything. This supports our viewpoint that each prophet comes with a specific message and keeps within its limits. So we cannot take as evidence Jesus' silence about corruption of Jewish books that these books are sound. Readers will see that almost all modern biblical critics give credence to the Muslims' claim that the Bible has been corrupted. We are speaking from a position of belief, not as enemies wishing to destroy and reject. Muslims believe in Jesus, and believe equally in his heavenly book and divine message which brought great benefit to mankind.

Ibn Hazm introduces his argument concerning textual corruption by saying that both Jews and Christians have distorted the Torah and the Gospels by Tabdil and Tahrif, changing and twisting the words.(66) He produces many examples to prove his point as will be seen later. In a more general attack on the relationship between the Jewish Bible, the Septuagint (or LXX, the first Greek version of the Old Testament made at Alexandria in the third century B.C) and the Samaritan Pentateuch, which he finds to contradict one another, he points out that the Christian and Jewish Torah are different. On the basis of the different ages

of the Patriarchs he concludes that the chronology of the Septuagint adds 1,300 years to the age of the world.(67) Thus it can be deduced either that Ezra copied the Hebrew correctly and the Septuagint is wrong; or that Ezra miscopied the Hebrew. "Whichever alternative is accepted, both parties believe in what is untrue"(68) Ibn Hazm's criticisms that indicate the differences between the texts are supported by other scholars.(69) He also refers to variations between the Septuagint and the Torah and the Pentateuch of the Samaritans.(70)

In the context of transmission Ibn Hazm begins by discrediting Christian Isnad or ascription, and casting doubt on the authority of the Christian narrators. He applies Islamic methodology to the Christian tradition.

The Gospels were not transmitted by Tawatur, unbroken succession.They had come down to Christians through three agents only: Paul, Mark and Luke, and these three had taken their material from only five sources; Peter, Matthew, John, James and Jude.(71) Paul says that he was with Peter only for fifteen days(72) when they first met, and their next meeting only occupied a brief time. The third time they met they were crucified. The five figures from whom the three agents draw their material were subjected to persecution and execution to such an extent that they were effectively scattered after Jesus' arrest; and Christians remained scattered until the time of Constantine (d. 337 A.C.), when they began to show themselves openly and to lead a more stable life. It could be argued that since Ibn Hazm recognizes the trials undergone by the Apostles he has no grounds for finding them personally culpable of corrupting the Injil Their guilt, however, lies in their failure to recognize or admit the fact of corruption, claiming that everything they wrote was inspired by God.

Ibn Hazm's view of the position of Christians after Jesus' death is clearly determined by his general attitude to the authenticity and authority of The Acts of the Apostles. This calls for some comment. Acts relate the status and pattern of early Christian worship, and provide evidence that Christians were gathering in groups and practising their faith in the public eye at an early date (Acts 2:5-42). It is clear that they were free to go to the synagogue and evangelise (Act 6:7) and that they attracted converts from among the rabbis. Persecutions which scattered them throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1ff) were succeeded by a period of stability (9:31) and controversial issues relating to Christian practices were discussed and resolved (15:6-21). In the light of the information relating to the early Christians in Acts, which suggest that they had the opportunity to practise their faith publically and private, collectively and individually - it is striking that Ibn Hazm presents a very different picture of Christian activity at this date. Was he ignorant of the evidence in Acts, or did he intentionally ignore it to suit his purpose in discounting Isnad?

The first possibility cannot be maintained since the author of al-Fisal was clearly familiar with the text.(73) He provided a good description of it, its possible authorship, size, etc.(74) He himself quoted from it.(75) and compared the miracles related in it with those of other religious sects, considering them to be false.(76) As for the second possibility, Ibn Hazm's discounting of the evidence in Acts is less a matter of deliberate, expedient omission than the consequence of Acts failing to fulfil the requirements of an authoritative text. In common with other Muslims, he would have found the information given in Acts unacceptable because it had not been transmitted by the masses to the masses, and was not

traceable to eye witnesses. The rejection of information carried in Acts is then, a consequence of its being based on the work of a single author.(77)

Given the circumstances of the early Christians as described by the author of al-Fisal Jesus' followers were in no position to keep and protect the Injil given to them intact by Jesus. According to Ibn Hazm God protected those parts of the Injil that he wished to stand as a testimony against corruption, and as proof of the truthfulness of *Islam*. This falls within Ibn Hazm's general outlook which states that the existence of negation or falsehood necessitates the existence of truth.(78) The differences among the people "of the religions" do not prove that there is no truth at all in their utterances, or that their true utterances cannot be distinguished from those which are false. He says that Jews and Christians necessarily have both truth and falsehood in their scriptures.(79) This leads directly to the question of how it is possible to mine out the truth in the Christian dogma and scriptures. Ibn Hazm argues that this task must be undertaken on the basis of reasoning and revelation;(80) for instance he rejects the Christian belief in Christ's divinity on the basis that it is irrational, and furthermore this leads him to reject those texts on which Christians claim to base such a belief. The argument of a reasonable foundation is supported by the argument based on revelation in that the Qur'an, as God's revelation, sanctions the objection to Christ's divinity. Ibn Hazm does not reproach Jews or Christians for the contradictions and mistakes per se in their scriptures but for their ascription of them to God. His objections are directed towards the failure of Jews and Christians to investigate properly the process of transmission or to admit the possibility that mistakes had crept into their texts. Muslims deny that Allah could be responsible for lies, or the acceptance of

transmitters as infallible people. It is necessary to make a minute and systematic examination of those responsible for transmission.

Ibn Hazm makes a plea for Christians to sift the material in their possession rather than simply accepting it as it is, and expresses the wish that they might countenance the possibility that transmitters might have committed errors. This having been done it would be possible to correct or reject mistakes on the Muslim scheme. Once again this leads the discussion to the question of how Jesus' true speech can best be distinguished from words that have falsely been put into his mouth. Ibn Hazm did not attempt to identify the genuine Gospel in toto - an undertaking which could not be expected from a literalist conscious that neither the Qur'an nor tradition had set a precedent for such a task. Nevertheless, his work does indicate some passages which he clearly regards as part of the real Injil as compared with others which he considers to be irrefutably corrupted. The criterion on which his distinctions are made is the Qur'an itself - he accepts what is consistent with the Qur'an and rejects what is incompatible with it, this latter understood as passages specifically denied in the Qur'an or implicitly contradictory.

Ibn Hazm's categorization of passages relating to the identity of the true Injil can be set forward in three groups. Firstly, he fully accepts certain passages, for example, Luke 4:24, describing this as part of what God protected and kept as a testimony against Christians.(81) Likewise he accepts those verses which argue for Jesus' humanity and prophethood and the references to the paraclete which he understands to constitute a prophecy about Muhammad. In this context it is noteworthy that Ibn Hazm's reference to the paraclete does not correspond to any of the four references in John (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:17). The text of al-Fisal

states that the prophecies concerning Muhammad in the Torah "are accompanied by those in the Injil concerning Jesus" prayer to God; "send down the Paraclete to teach the people that the son of man is human",(82) followed by the comment: "This is perfectly clear for whosoever is ready to understand; when Jesus knew that his followers would exaggerate his status, insisting that he was God, or the son of God, he prayed that He might send down (the Paraclete) who would clarify the fact that he was neither a deity nor the son of the deity, but a man born of woman".(83) Ibn Hazm goes on to ask whether any prophet succeeding Jesus clarified this point, other than Muhammad. The above passage concerning Jesus' prayer to God in al-Fisal represents an unusual error from such an exact critic, and the recent discovery and publication of Ibn Hazm's al-UsuI wa al-Furu suggests that it is an editorial error. This book gives the complete picture of the identification between the Paraclete and the prophet made by Ibn Hazm. The other passages in John concerning the same issue are discussed but the quotations differ from those in the current version, and correspond closely to Ibn Rabban's version.(84) Ibn Hazm comments on the passages that "despite the differences between them they are close (in meaning). They differ because the Apostles who took them from Jesus were many". The explanation of the passages in al-Usul is worth quoting at length:

> "Who is this, the spirit of truth, who does not speak on his own but through what is revealed to him? and who is this who came after Jesus and gave his witness to what Jesus brought (from heaven) ... and who declared the truth, and foretold the unseen things such as the coming of the anti-christ or the one-eyed liar and those matters

> concerning the day of judgement, the coming, the hellfire and paradise which are not mentioned in the Torah, the Gospel and the Psalter - except our Prophet Muhammad".[85]

It is very interesting that our author refers to Matthew 11:14 "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come", and follows this with the comment:

> "This name (Elijah) can be understood in a number of ways. Firstly, it is possible that he (Jesus) said 'Ahmad' is to come, but they changed the name, substituting Elijah instead. Secondly, Jesus may have said 'iluhim' or 'il' was to come, meaning 'God is to come'. The coming of God is the sending of revelation, and no sacred book has come after Jesus except the Qur'an. Thirdly it is possible that Jesus intended something - not necessarily a person - and called that something Elijah".[86]

The above quotation reveals Ibn Hazm's firm belief in the prophecy of Muhammad appearing in the Gospel, although he does not specifically refer here to the Qur'an, 61:6. In this passage the Qur'an employs the word "Ahmad" rather than "Muhammad" to name the Prophet.

Leaving aside the problem of the quotation, it is important that Ibn Hazm should have been interested in identifying the Paraclete with a Prophet who followed Jesus, and who must have been Muhammad on the basis of the (mistaken) quotation in al-Fisal. Unlike some earlier and later Muslims, Ibn Hazm does

not develop this argument further - there is a broad range of arguments surrounding the identity of the Paraclete in both Muslim and non-Muslim scholarship.

Secondly, Ibn Hazm recognizes that some verses in the Gospel accounts may be true - he does not commit himself to saying that they are remnants of the true Injil, but he does not exclude the possibility that they could be. An example of this can be found in his comment on Matthew 16:19-24. He begins with an outright denial that Jesus offered the keys of heaven to Peter: "By God I swear that Jesus never said such a thing",(88) such an authorization being, in his view, destructive to the omnipotence of God, but he recognizes the possibility that Jesus' rebuke to Peter which follows in the text may be correct: "It is not impossible that he uttered the last statement.(89).

Thirdly, as indicated above, the author of al-Fisal absolutely denies certain verses which purport to be the utterances of Jesus; introducing his comments with a series of phrases such as: "By God, Jesus never said so", "This could not have come from God, nor a prophet, nor an infallible source, nor an honest scholar, from among the people", "By God, nobody but a liar could have said this, it could not have come from God".(90)

These three categories represent the general outline within which Ibn Hazm suggests to his reader the actual utterances of Jesus.

The question of how God safeguarded those verses welcomed as genuine by the author of al-Fisal is not one that Ibn Hazm considers as relevant. The fact that God chose to protect parts of the Gospel only is a matter of God's will, which is beyond question; however parallels are drawn between the destruction of certain parts of the true Gospel, the loss of some ancient sacred books and the murder of some of the prophets,

some of whom were martyred for the greater glory of God. Moreover, God preserved the essential part of the revealed Gospel to stand as a witness against those people who failed to keep the Gospel intact. Nevertheless the reason behind God's will concerning the survival of the Gospel, rather than the consequences of His will, lies beyond the understanding of men, it is "as God wishes" and to query those would be fruitless.

The author of al-Fisal seems to reject the idea that the correct passages in the extant Gospels have been either transmitted by an unbroken chain of authorities - a view which is supported by all Muslim scholars with the exception of an insignificant minority to which Ibn Hazm refers in al-Fisal and which he rejects as ignorant of the Qur'an and tradition - or that they are revealed or inspired,[(91)] as has been discussed earlier in this thesis. In this context the Qur'anic verse which states that the disciples of Jesus had been inspired by God to believe in Him and his messenger, Jesus,[(92)] should be noted - it does not, however, constitute a generalization which can be taken to embrace the term inspiration as understood by Christians. Moreover, in the Qur'an God endowed Jesus with the Holy Spirit only as all His prophets and messengers were endowed. In common with all Muslims Ibn Hazm denied the disciples and apostles as prophets or capable of performing miracles as discussed above. Thus the author under review ascribed the operation of safeguarding some of the revealed Gospel to God Himself but rejected the possibility that this had been managed by an unbroken chain of authorities; he does not feel impelled to go into the question of how God could have preserved, a part at least, of the true Gospel, in depth.

On the subject of such an important issue the author of this thesis has accounted it worth while to suggest an answer which would be faithful to Ibn Hazm's own outlook.

It has already been mentioned that Ibn Hazm does not exclude the possibility of a true written Gospel - this is clear from his phrases: "The Gospel has ben lost except for a few portions", and "God has taken it away". Has He taken some of the previous revelation away? It is possible that God removed those parts of the true Gospel at the time when Christians began to add to or omit from the scriptures. If this is the case, the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a single, complete volume was removed, surviving only in partial form, either in the memory of the disciples, or as an actual text which was introduced into the Gospels by the evangelists but mixed with human additions which they regarded as divinely inspired. It seems likely that Ibn Hazm considers that those parts of the true Gospel removed by God can be inferred from the Qur'an. However, a significant problem arises from this: if the idea of an unbroken chain of authorities is excluded by Ibn Hazm, how can he allow himself to accept any parts of a Gospel that has been transmitted by authors outside the accepted system of Isnad? If some parts are corrupted by failing to fulfil the demands of Isnad, why not all?

Interestingly enough Ibn Hazm addressed himself to precisely this area of difficulty in his objections to a small Muslim group who acknowledged Isnad with reference to the Jewish and Christian scriptures. He would appear to have had no direct contact with this group, nor to have seen any of their writings if such existed, stating simply that "we have been told (about them)" and from this they would seem to have exerted insignificant contemporary influence.

The reference to them in al-Fisal, being of such importance to Ibn Hazm's own attitude to the four Gospels, is worth quoting at length:

"We have been told of a number of

> Muslims who, out of ignorance, deny that the Torah and Injil have been corrupted at the hands of Jews and Christians. The reason which caused them (this group of Muslims) to maintain this is their lack of knowledge of the Qur'an and *Sunna*".[93]

He then refers to the Qur'anic passage which mentions the corruption, which will be discussed in detail later in this book, and continues:

> "We say to those Muslims who hold that their (Jewish and Christian) transmission has come through an unbroken chain of authorities and is necessarily true knowledge which can be taken as evidence, that no doubt Jews and Christians would agree that what they received and reported of Moses and Jesus contains no reference to Muhammad and no prophecies of his prophethood. If they (the group of Muslims) acknowledge such reports in part, they must also acknowledge them in full, whether they like it or not. If they think them (Jews and Christians) liars in some of their reports but not in others they are guilty of obstinate contradiction. It is impossible that the tradition which comes through a single channel can be partly true and partly false ... we do not know how a Muslim

> could make it lawful to deny the corruption of their Torah and Injil while he hears the speech of God telling him that Muhammad was foretold in both sacred books, and nothing like this exists in the books in the hands of Jews and Christians which they claim to be the Torah and Injil. It is necessary that those ignorant Muslims should either believe the word of their God - that Jews and Christians have changed the Torah and Injil, or that they should become fools and unbelievers in God's word. If this is so, the evidence of corruption we have shown in those books must be raised against all of them together ... what we have discovered as evidence of the corruption and lies in the four Gospels are clear to the extent that if there was no scriptural evidence of the extent to which Jews and Christians have corrupted their texts we could be as sure of their distortion as we would be of the evidence of our senses".[94]

Research has failed to identify the particular group of Muslims to which Ibn Hazm refers or to discover the theoretical basis of their thought, and such a task is beyond the scope of this book.

The relevance of Ibn Hazm's objections to the Muslim group he mentions is, of course, his argument that tradition transmitted

through a single channel cannot be true in part only. If this is applied to his own distinction between true and false in the four Gospels and the classification noted above it would appear to undermine his own argument. However, it should be emphasized that in this instance he does not base his distinctions on the ground of Isnad, but on revelation, that is, the Qur'an. As a strict believer in the Qur'an he accepts those verses which, as the word of God, refer to the Gospel of Jesus as having been revealed to him, and as containing guidance. Likewise he accepts those verses which describe the corruption of this Gospel which, as he understands it, consists of omission or addition. Concerning the safeguarding of some divine portions of that Gospel, the author of al-Fisal regarded God himself as the agent of protection. In this the argument relating to Isnad is subsumed in the higher argument of direct divine intervention. Thus Ibn Hazm constructs his theory of corruption on the one hand, but the divine energy of safeguarding on the other, on a Qur'anic basis. During his entire examination of the four Gospels in which his reasoning and critical powers discover certain contradictions and mistakes he never loses sight of the central reference point of the Qur'an and the necessity of proving what the Qur'an maintains.

In conclusion to his discussion of the Gospels Ibn Hazm states that whatever was revealed in the Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the prophet is acceptable; whatever is either discredited by the Qur'an and *Sunna*, or demonstrates its own falsity, is to be rejected. Any portion that is neither sanctioned nor discredited could be true or false and Muslims should neither believe nor disbelieve it. The author of al-Fisal supports his conclusions by reference to the Qur'an and the Sunna as shall be shown later, and finally allies himself with the comment of Ibn Abbas as related

by Al Bukhari:

> "How can you ask the People of the Book about anything when your own book, which was revealed to the Prophet by God is fresh (recently revealed). You can read it, crystal-clear, unmixed, and it tells you that the People of the Book have changed the book of Allah the Almighty, and have altered it. They wrote it with their own hands and then sold it cheap saying that it came from God.[95]

Ibn Hazm describes this as: "the soundest Isnad or ascription to Ibn Abbas, which is exactly our view. There is no difference between the companions on this matter.[96]

His reference to "the soundest Isnad is an implicit rejection of a tradition that Ibn Abbas said that the tahrif inhered in exegesis rather than the letter of the Torah, which had not suffered change. Ibn Hazm clearly discounts this tradition and those who follow it, as mentioned before.[97] I agree with al-Fisal's distinction of traditions here - Ibn Abbas statement that exegesis rather than text was false was most probably made on a particular occasion with reference to a particular scriptural passage and cannot be taken as a general statement. The tradition related by al Bukhari correctly records Ibn Abbas understanding of corruption as being in the text itself. A fuller examination of the meaning of corruption will be provided later in this book.

Ibn Hazm's argument that the four Gospels contain small portions of the actual revealed Gospel should be set against other opinions concerning the extent of the survival of the actual

Gospel. Ibn Taymiyya indicates the range of views on this matter.

> "Some Muslims, and some People of the Book, hold that the actual words of the scriptures have been changed. Of those people some consider the corrupted portions to be large in number, and regard them as more numerous than the sound. This is especially so in the case of the Gospels in which the areas of weakness are more obvious than the Torah. A few would go so far as to state that the scriptures are altogether empty of sacredness, while others would regard those passages which have suffered textual change as minor, a more obvious viewpoint. Most, however, maintain that the four Gospels contain but a few of God's words".(98)

Ibn Hazm clearly belongs with this latter group, as has been indicated above. Ibn Taymiyya defined his own position by concluding that it was best to consider the Torah and Injil in the hands of the People of the Book as containing some of God's commandments. His reference to the People of the Book in the quotation above is interesting, whether he was in fact referring to orthodox Christians, declared Christian heretics, or People of the Book who had converted to Islam is not clear. Quite unambiguous, however, is the character of the corruption to which the author refers in his description of the range of attitudes to the survival of the actual Gospel, it is a matter of textual rather than exegetical falseness.

Having presented the views of Ibn Hazm on the transmission of the Christian tradition in the context of Muslim thinking it is important to sketch out the Christian interpretation of the same matter as a point of comparison. It is not possible, of course, to provide a full account but an indication of the areas of coincidence and difference can at least be suggested. Irenaeus points to the problems of defining authoritative tradition in his comment on contemporary heretics:

> "When they are refuted out of the scriptures they betake them to accusing the scriptures themselves as if there were something amiss with them and they carried no authority, because the scriptures, they say, contain diverse utterances, and because the truth cannot be found in them by those that know not the tradition. For that, they say, has been handed down not by means of writings but by means of the living voice...".(99)

Clearly at this date the precise location of the authority of tradition, whether it was discoverable in the scriptures themselves, or existed in some area of oral tradition external to the texts, was a matter of dispute. Irenaeus complains that the heretics to whom he refers appeal to their individual understanding as authorizing tradition, and counters this with an appeal to; "that tradition which is derived from the Apostles, and which is safeguarded in the churches through the successions of presbyters.(100) He emphasizes the known succession of bishops transmitted through the church and traceable back to the Apostles who "have lodged all that there is of truth with her, (the church) as with a rich bank, holding back nothing".(101) Unorthodoxy is to

be determined by its failure to recognize the primitive succession[102] as the test of doctrine:

> "all doctrine which accords with those apostolic churches, the sources and originals of the Faith, must be reckoned as the truth, since it preserves without doubt what the churches received and the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God...".[103]

Irenaeus' conception of unbroken tradition has some parallels to the Islamic notion of Isnad but, as can be seen in the following quotation, is far less vigorous in its requirements:

> "an unbroken succession from the beginning so that first bishop (of any church) had as his precursor and the source of his authority one of the Apostles or one of the Apostolic men who, though not an Apostle, continued with the Apostles.[104]

Irenaeus, while noting that the objections of heretics could focus on what they regarded as "diverse utterances" in the scriptures, raising precisely that problem to which Muslims have applied themselves to study, answers those heretics in terms which are far more general and which do not really clarify or solve this difficulty. His description of the transmission of tradition does not specify either exactly what constitutes tradition - whether it is the utterances of Jesus, forms of worship etc., or a firmly-drawn rationale for transmission in the shape of describing, for example, the times and places of transmission or an exact definition of authority. The phrase "apostolic men" is, for instance, in sharp contrast to the Islamic clarity on the number

and identity of Muhammad's Companions.

In more recent times Stott has argued that there is a sharp distinction between scripture, which is divine and obligatory; and tradition, which is human and optional and which must be tested against and sanctioned by scripture.(105) He makes the point that the balance between the authority of scripture and that of tradition was a central element in the upheaval of the Reformation Rome insisting that scripture did not constitute the sole authority, but required a parallel acceptance of "unwritten traditions".(106) From the point of view of the reformed churches "the only 'tradition' which scripture recognizes is scripture. For 'tradition' (paradosis) is what is handed down, and God's purpose has been that His word, His unique revelation given to Prophets and Apostles, should be transmitted from generation to generation. So the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: 'What you have heard from me ... entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also'.(107) From Paul to Timothy, from Timothy to faithful men, and from them to others also".(108)

Stott argues that scripture is apostolic tradition, while ecclesiastical tradition is the teaching of the church.(109)

Ibn Hazm's arguments against the Gospels as inspired or revealed is inextricably linked to his conception of Isnad as the test of authenticity. The absence of evidence of Isnad leads him to conclude that the Gospels could not have been written by Jesus' disciples, nor by faithful people. Western scholarship has also concerned itself with the authority of the Christian Gospels and has provided material that could be considered to add substantial weight to the complaints of the author of al-Fisal regarding the lack of Isnad in the Christian tradition.

Streeter, for example, points out that the designation by the early church of certain texts as authentic must now be recognized

as subject to error and revision. 2 Peter and James, for example, were not generally received for centuries, despite their antiqui y ad orthodoxy. If acceptance was slow to arrive for some texts, other texts which were not apostolic were incorrectly designated so: "That the church accepted as Apostolic certain writings which in point of fact were not so, is undoubted".(110) Wikenhauser also points out that the Canon remained flexible for a considerable period of time, and that by 200 A.C. "The New Testament at this time is not a closed collection".(111) The Islamic argument for the original existence of an uncorrupted true Gospel of Jesus also has its parallel in various superstitions made by Western scholars regarding the sources of the four Gospels. Eusebius' comment on Matthew: "so then Matthew composed the oracles (Tahoxia) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could"(112) had led many scholars, as Streeter points out, to hypothesize the existence of "a lost collection of the sayings of the Lord, or a collection of proof-texts".(113) Streeter's important work details the complex issues of the relationships between the different early churches that prompted a variety of attitudes towards the authority of certain texts.(114)

It is no matter for surprise that the controversies apparent in Western scholarship regarding the authority and sources of the Christian scriptures should have been traced by Muslim scholars. Rahmat Allah, for example, emphasizing the absence of *Isnad* in the Christian texts points out that the position that Matthew 'might' have been written originally in Hebrew and then translated into Greek, or 'might' have been written in Greek, demonstrates that conjecture, rather than Isnad, is the basis on which the authority of the Gospel text is established.(115) Furthermore he rehearses the problem of canonical acceptance to which, as has been pointed out above, Streeter and Wikenhauser addressed themselves. The epistles of James, Jude, the second

epistle of Peter, and the second and third of John were ascribed, without evidence, to the Apostles, and remained doubtful until 363 A.C., while John's apocalypse was doubtful until 397 A.C. He points out that Peter's second epistle, Jude's epistle, and John's second and third epistles and revelation have been rejected by Arab Christians. He refers to the work of a critic which states that such epistles were not included in the early Christian church, and pointed out that in the Syriac translation the texts mentioned above, and verses 2-11 in John's Gospel chapter two, and the seventh verse of chapter V of John's first epistle are omitted. Indicating the activity of the first Council of Nicea he notes that six epistles and revelations were rejected. He continues by arguing that in spite of Origen's statement that Paul had written something to all churches, the epistles ascribed to Paul are not wholly his - his epistle to the Hebrews not having been included by several churchmen.(116) Even if Paul's epistles are truly his, Rahmat Allah Ibn Khalil insists on Paul's unacceptability to Muslims. The other disciples, however, who lived after Jesus' ascension can be compared with the good Mujtahidun - legists who formulate independent decisions in legal and theological matters, and who are thus liable to mistakes. Isnad is absent in the crucial period preceding the last decade of the second century. For example, the original text of Matthew is missing. Bearing in mind that the disciples failed to understand Jesus on many occasions, and that Luke and Mark were not Jesus' disciples, it is impossible that the Gospels should have been inspired, according to Rahmat Allah Ibn Khalil.(117)

The Background to Ibn Hazm's Concept of Tahrif

Ibn Hazm's conception of Tahrif is drawn from the authority of the Qur'an. Before his views on this matter are discussed in detail some reference should be made to Peter the Venerable (c.

490-551 AH = 1096-1156 A.C.) who, in the process of his project to study Islam from original sources, provided a Christian angle on the issue of Tahrif. Peter, while admitting that the persecution of the Christians by the Romans had involved the destruction of sacred books(118) argued that the extensive establishment of Christianity ensured that the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles survived intact. If they were destroyed in one place, they were saved in another. If, he argues, the texts were not lost, there is no reason to suppose that they were falsified either. He quotes a French proverb to support his point "What two know, everybody knows"(119). Furthermore he insists that as the kur'an contains material that is also in the Gospels, to condemn the Gospels as false is tantamount to admitting that the kur'an itself is doubtful. Peter's argument is one that fails to discriminate between the Muslim conception of the true Injil - the uncorrupted scripture to which the Qur'an refers - and the corrupted Gospel in the possession of Christians. His attitude to Tahrif is the basis of his argument, and as Kuitzeck comments "Peter was ill-informed on this matter"(120). He maintained that the kur'an contained no references to the corruption of the Bible although there are many precise and unambiguous references on this subject which will be considered in more detail later.

Peter's argument that the extent of Christianity, which he describes as existing in Persia, Ethiopia and India safeguarded the original texts is not a strong one, "the number of Christians at the close of the 1st century is very uncertain...".(121)

Tertullian's claim that "all your citizens have become Christians" has been described as "obviously rhetorical exaggeration".(122) Christianity was not introduced into Ethiopia until the fourth century.(123) The church had certainly existed in India since the fourth century although the claim that Thomas the

Apostle evangelized India cannot be regarded as certain.[124] Peter's assertion, it should be clear, does not answer the possibility that corruption took place at an early date in the history of Christianity. The kur'an is not specific concerning the date at which the Injil suffered Tahrif.

The Qur'anic verses ignored by Peter the Venerable which refer to the corruption of Jewish and Christian scriptures fall into two categories. Firstly, there are passages which discuss the corruption of the Torah and state that the Jews are responsible for this.[125] Although the culpability of the Jews could be applied equally to the Christians who have adopted the Torah as the sacred foundation of the New Testament, giving, however, a different interpretation to it, the concern of this book at this point is with the second category of verses. These refer to the Jews and Christians under the title 'People of the Book' and charge them with corruption of their scriptures.

Ibn Hazm refers to 3:71 in this context,[126] but sets the verse among others quoted from the kur'an, without comment. Al Tabari, however, applying himself to the same verse:

> "People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with vanity, and conceal the truth and that wittingly?"

comments that by this God means the people of the Torah and Injil, and asks them why they mix truth with vanity, and hide the foretelling of Muhammad when they mix truth with vanity, and hide the foretelling of Muhammad when they found it written in their Torah and Injil. He adds that the verse is to be understood as a statement from God that the People of the Book intentionally disbelieved Muhammad and concealed what they all knew of the prophecy about him in those books.[127] If this is added to all the other Qur'anic passages insisting that Muhammad was prophesied

in the Jewish and Christian scriptures,(128) and compared with the fact pointed out by Ibn Hazm - that both peoples agreed that there is no mention of Muhammad in their books,(129) it must be concluded that the Christians and Jews corrupted those parts referring to Muhammad.

It is noticeable that verses dealing with the corruption of the Injil are scanty in comparison with those devoted to the corruption of the Torah - but it would be an error to imagine that the kur'an makes no reference at all to the corruption of the four Gospels. In my view this is the consequence of the Jewish assertion that their Torah is that given to Moses by God, and their insistence that it contains no corruption of any kind, as Ibn Hazm described. The Christians, however, have considered their Gospel to be in the form of four books, a view which makes the possibility of corruption so likely that it is not necessary for the kur'an to be so emphatic - as Ibn Taymiyya commented, distortion in the Christian Gospels is more obvious and clear than in the Jewish Torah. Similarly, the Christian rejection of the idea of a single genuine Gospel of Jesus is so firm that the kur'an devotes a number of references to asserting its existence, as mentioned above. Thus the Qur'anic verses, in number and emphasis, are designed to match the strength of its opponents.

Qur'an scholars are in agreement concerning the presence of corruption in the Gospels, but there are a variety of views on the precise form that the corruption takes - some consider it to be located in the text itself, others regard it as being a matter of exegesis. Ibn Hazm's primary loyalty is to the first group, although he ventures into criticism of Christian exegesis when it proves useful for his arguments, and this may be a matter of detailed criticism of an individual exegete, or objections to the underlying Christian ethos of basing their scriptures on the Torah.

An investigation of the etymology of Tahrif,:

An investigation of the etymology of Tahrif corruption, constitutes a useful starting point for contextualizing Ibn Hazm's position on the subject of the Christian Gospels. The original meaning of the word is "to lean from the pen in a certain direction" or "to twist words to correspond to one's own desire".(130) The Andalusian interpreter Ibn 'Atiyya stated that Tahrif means "to change or transfer something from its original character to another and that Ibn Abbas held that the Jewish (and possibly the Christian, by implication) corruption and change was to be found in exegesis, the letter of the Torah surviving intact, although a second school of scholars maintained that the letters themselves had been changed on the basis that although the Jews had been asked to safeguard the Torah, unlike the kur'an it was not safeguarded by God Himself.(131)

As has been mentioned al Bukhari's statement concerning Ibn Abbas and quoted by Ibn Hazm affirms, however, that the Tahrif was in the text of the Torah. Furthermore al Tabari ascribed to Ibn Abbas a comment on 3:78, that the Jews had added to the book of God that which God had not revealed.(132) The great commentator Mujahid stated that Jews and Christians denied Muhammad's prophethood - even though it is stated in the Torah and the Gospel - but it is not clear whether he regards their denial as a matter of exegesis or as prompted by a corrupt text.(133) The Caliph Al Mahdi clearly told his critic, the patriarch Timothy, that the Bible had contained many prophecies about Muhammad but the People of the Book had corrupted their texts and they had removed the prophecies.(134) Al Mahdi asked Timothy why the Gospels were different from one another and were contradictory, and like his successor, Ibn Hazm touched on the point that they were written by four different authors.(135)

Timothy's reply has been mentioned elsewhere in this book.[136]

Al Jahiz argues that both Christian transmission and exegesis are corrupt: "We are certain that he (Jesus) came with none except pure unity and monotheism - that is supported by reason - but not the Trinity. We know that the Christians are in error both on the side of transmission, and on the side of exegesis".[137]

Al Hasan Ibn Ayyub (c. 377 AH = 987 A.C.) has been described by Monsignor Ignazio de Matteo as not denying "the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels" but simply criticizing the Christian understanding of them.[138] This is a mistaken interpretation; Ibn Ayyub certainly does refer to Christian assertions of Christ's divinity and references to the Christian assertion of Jesus' Lordship, commenting "we have described them according to your understanding of them, we accepted your saying (of them)", but further on he makes it clear that such acceptance is for arguments sake. He is unambiguous in stating his belief in the material corruption of the Gospels "... we are in no doubt that the People of the Book have altered some of their words".[139] Al Biruni (d. 440 AH = 1048 A.C.), a contemporary of Ibn Hazm, concerned himself with the dating of Biblical events especially in the context of the Old Testament. He, too, asserted that the scriptures had been misunderstood by Christians, and that material corruption of the genuine text had taken place.[140]

Al Razi, in his commentary offered various explanations of how corruption in the Torah could have taken place, but concluded that although the Qur'anic verses might refer to textual change it was preferable to consider it as a matter of exegesis. His view - that the Torah had been transmitted through an unbroken chain of authorities[141] - is contrary to common Muslim belief

and to the argument put forward in al-Fisal.

Wahb Ibn Munabbih stated that the Torah and Injil, as they were sent down by God, have not suffered change in the letter, but only through the Tahrif in exegesis, and in those books which Jews and Christians have written themselves but which, they claim, have come from God. The actual books of God, however, are safeguarded against change. Commenting on Wahb, Ibn Kathir argues that if he were referring to the texts in the hands of Jews and Christians there could be no doubt that corruption had found its way into the texts. He strengthened his arguments by referring to the translation into Arabic which bore witness to many errors, additions and general confusions in the understanding of many, if not all, Jews and Christians. Ibn Kathir concluded that Wahb is right, however, if he is stating that the revealed books of God, the originals, have been preserved against corruption.(142)

Al-Shahrastani remarked that Tahrif means "changing the written word to an alternative to give it a corrupted meaning".(143)

It should be clear from the above that there is a considerable range of opinion on the issue of corruption. Ibn Taymiyya summarizes the broad outline of this as a general consensus that corruption in interpretation can and does take place. There is no quarrel between Jews, Christians and Muslims on this matter; dispute, however, arises when the focus turns to the texts themselves. Ibn Taymiyya sums up the Muslim view as a general acceptance that Tahrif does indeed apply to parts of the Christian Gospels, although its precise extent may be debated among scholars.(144) The shortage of specific Qur'anic information on this is insignificant when compared to the total view of the book in refuting the Crucifixion, Resurrection and the Ascension as depicted by Christians. Such a refutation implicitly states that

considerable portions of the extant Gospels are human invention, and consequently corrupt. He regarded the Crucifixion and other events as human insertions in the Gospels.[145]

Ibn Taymiyya presents an extremely lucid and thorough account of alleged corruption in the Gospel, and his arguments clarify Ibn Hazm's point of view by comparison and contrast.

Ibn Taymiyya begins by stating the facts; that there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Christians agree that Mark did not see Jesus, and that the Gospels were written after Jesus' death. The same author then points out that none of the evangelists described the Gospels as the words of God. After these prefatory remarks the argument shifts into a cogent comparison between Christianity and Islam on the basis of their respective sacred books.

Initially the argument takes the form of an extended analogy between the Gospels and the Hadith. Since the evangelists neither claim to have collected Jesus' sayings in toto, nor to have transcribed the speech of God, their productions are parallel to the books of Hadith which are not infallible, as the Qur'an is. Like the Hadith Ibn Taymiyya regards the Gospels as sound in the main, and therefore worthy of observance. Nevertheless they contain what is essentially a mixture of divine and human material. Parts of them are God's sayings, and sections of them contain the words of the Prophet revealed to Him by God. Ibn Taymiyya thus acknowledges that parts of the Gospel were revealed to Jesus, but that these are juxtaposed with Jesus' sayings and accounts of His deeds as a Prophet.

Having established a basis of material from mixed sources in the Gospels, he clearly paves the way for the possibility of corruption. He treats the next section of his argument in a pattern of contrasts between Muslim attitudes to preserving sacred texts

and their Christian counterparts. Firstly he considers, and stresses most emphatically, the importance of memorizing the Qur'an and Hadith as a security measure for the preservation of the texts. This, for him, would ensure the survival of the sacred books even if all known texts were destroyed. By comparison, the People of the Book have no tradition of exactly memorizing their texts,[146] and thus would be unable to reproduce them if they were destroyed.

Although Ibn Taymiyya acknowledges that some People of the Book learn parts of their texts by heart, these people, he comments, are not trustworthy. The breaking of the chain of Prophets, as in Judaism, leads to corruption. Corruption as he defines it, can be either in the text or in its explication.

The author of al-Jawab then presses his point by comparing the Muslim Isnad, system of ascription, with its lack in the methodology of the People of the Book. Lacking such a system which provides a rationale for meticulous sifting and accuracy, it is not possible that Christians are able to protect their Gospels.

He then concentrates his argument specifically on the Christian Gospels themselves, and doubts the precision with which scattered disciples could recount events in the past. He focuses on the Passion narrative, detailing inconsistencies between the accounts. If it is possible for there to be uncertainty about this event it is logical to assume that the Gospel accounts of Jesus' sayings are also in doubt. Ibn Taymiyya does not, however, accuse the known disciples of lying, and in this he differs from his more fiery predecessor, Ibn Hazm. He does not ascribe blame to the disciples, but regards them as prone to error through circumstances. Their errors do not, in his view, undermine Jesus' message.

Problems of corruption and disagreement among Christians

are demonstrated in Christian sectarianism, most of which clusters round uncertainties as to the exact meaning of the Incarnation.

Ibn Taymiyya refers to various heresies and disputes about the union of divine and human in the person of Jesus.

The lack of stability - which he sees in the Christian faith - is further witnessed by the fact that the bulk of their observances were invested after the time of the disciples.

Finally he moves to consider the problem of the texts themselves in linguistic terms. Jesus spoke Hebrew or Aramaic, the language in which the Gospels were first written. Translation into several languages inevitably led to a process of error and corruption.(147) Ibn Taymiyya's perceptive scholarship would be impressive in isolation, but has been given further validity by modern writers who freely admit the difficulties arising from transmission and translation.

Moffatt, for example, pointed out that the possibility of interpolations cannot be ruled out, "even where the extant text does not suggest any break"(148) Like B.H. Streeter,(149) he argues that the desire to harmonize diverse texts was the foundation of significant changes, and furthermore suggests that copyists sometimes played virtually an editorial role in approaching their material.(150)

Ibn Kammuna, writing in the thirteenth century, pointed out that adaptation of the prophetic books to Christian use necessarily involved corruption. "Many of the prophetic texts were distorted by the Christians in the process of translation from Hebrew into Greek and Syriac".(151) Such distortions may have been the result "of intent or negligence". M. Dibelius gives the following

remarks:

> "These Christians believed themselves to be more faithful to their Master when they explained His sayings by expanding them, and then followed them with understanding, than if they had abhorred any addition and passed on the original form of His words".[152]

In the view of the above passage the Christians mixed their own expressions with the sayings of Jesus and they considered this action to be more faithful to their Master.

As an example of addition to the scriptures William Barclay quotes Mark 2:15-17: and comments on the text as follows:

> "This line of thought holds that the actual saying of Jesus ends with the words: 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick'. And that then the community added the interpretation: 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners'; for this was the very principle on which the missionary work of the Christian Church was based. In other words the community has, as it were, put into the mouth of Jesus a general principle which is the expansion and the interpretation of a particular saying".[153]

Furthermore the same writer gives the following remarks on Mark 3:31-35:

> "This line of thought holds that Jesus' actual words and with, 'Here are my mother and my brothers, and that then from this the community extracted a quite general principle: 'Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother'. The community has extracted from a particular word of Jesus on a particular occasion a word for all time.(154)

R. Bultman went very far in regarding the passage about the Sabbath in Mark 2:23-27 as merely a production of the church and therefore not authentic history. In his view, it was formulated to justify through the words of Jesus the church's use of the Sabbath. This is on the ground that Jesus was not questioned about his own behaviour, but about his disciples' behaviour.

The Biblical critics argue about the question of whether or not chapter 21 in John was written by the author of 1-20 or by another person.(155)

Moreover textual alteration is admitted by the form criticism scholars in the New Testament, for example:

> "The ending of the Gospel of Mark (16:9-20) is no part of what its author originally wrote: (a) Justin alluded to it and Irenaeus quoted from it; it is included in some important uncial manuscripts, mostly 'Western'. (b) On the other hand, it is absent from the writings of Clement, Origen and Eusebius, and is omitted in Codex Vaticanus and Codes Sinaiticus, as well

> as in the older Latin and Syriac versions; the Freer manuscript contains a different ending entirely. (c) Therefore, though it was undoubtedly added at an early date, it is not authentic".(156)

Robert Grant goes on to say: "The story about a woman 'Taken in adultery' and forgiven by Jesus does not belong to the Gospel of John. (a) It occurs in the Byzantine text of the Gospel, usually as John 7:53-8:11 but sometimes after John 7:36 or 21:24 (in a small group of manuscripts it is found after Luke 21:38). (b) No manuscript before the end of the fourth century contains it, no Church Father, in the same period, refers to it. (c) Therefore it is not authentic.

A more difficult problem occurs in Luke 22:19-20: (a) All but a few manuscripts include these verses, which are close to what Paul relates about the Last Supper in I Corinthians 11.24-5.(157)

Ibn Taymiyya raised the question of the credibility of the Crucifixion, and points out that one might be led to ask for some positive guarantee for the soundness of the Gospels conveyed by the disciples who, according to him, were confused about the Crucifixion and Resurrection.(158)

The above account illustrates the diversity of opinions held by Muslim scholars on the question of corruption. Matteo's gazetteer of the attitudes of Muslims to <u>Tahrif</u> has already been mentioned: he attempts to sum up his findings by arguing that the Qur'an implies that corruption is in the area of interpretation, and is not a question of material corruption: "the lie is not inside, but outside of the scriptures".(159) Furthermore he imposes a historical pattern on the scholars who dealt with corruption arguing that

"the early traditionalists recognize the genuineness of the Biblical text"(160) while later writers were divided between a belief in exegetical and material corruption. The Islamic writers mentioned above in this section should illustrate that a belief in the textual corruption of the scriptures can be traced back to early writers. Watt, like Matteo, argues that the kur'an does not put forward any general view of textual corruption, although he admits that it alleges the concealment of scriptural passages. The accusation of Tahrif does not, he states, mean tampering with the written text.(161) Goldziher, in his study of Ibn Khaldun seems much closer to the facts, pointing out that "Tahrif in Muslim thought, since the encounter of Islam with Jews and Christians meant the alteration of the Biblical text by later hands".(162)

It is now necessary to turn to the Christian understanding of the Gospel tradition and corruption in order to demonstrate how the Christians attempt to defend the Gospels against the charge of Tahrif.

The Christian View of the Gospel Tradition

The Christian viewpoint of the authenticity of the Gospel Tradition should be considered. There is considerable diversity among Christian scholars when considering this matter, but without engaging in a lengthy discussion of the details of various hypotheses regarding transmission, some significant points will be raised here.

Behind the scholarly investigation of texts in existence, and texts which are assumed to have existed, lies the belief that the Gospel tradition derives from eye witness accounts of the life of Jesus: "Tradition is unanimous that the written Gospel was the substitute for the living voice".(163) Thus an oral tradition of eye witness accounts is seen as the background of the current written

Gospels. This oral tradition itself is regarded as complex, drawing not only on eye witness narrations, but also on those narrations shaped and adapted for preaching purposes; as Irenaeus indicates the object of the early preachers and consequently of early tradition, was to proclaim: "Those good things which are ours from God".(164) The adaptation of eye witness accounts for the purposes of evangelism must be seen in the light of the problems attending the process of translation. Translation from the original Aramaic into Greek was itself a piecemeal business, "No one ever sat down and translated the material as a whole".(165) Parts of the Gospel would be translated when it was required.(166) Furthermore each fragmented piece of translation would itself be influenced by local considerations; "subjected to certain influences through the church life or milieu where they were handed down or received their final written form".(167).Thus the character of the early oral tradition and of the beginnings of the written tradition were subject to a considerable variety of particular shaping influences. Streeter offers a thorough account of these in his study of the origins of the four Gospels.(168)

An insight into the early written Gospels and attitudes towards them can be found in the fact that quotations from them given by the church fathers differ from the current texts. Justin, for example, mentions several events for which there are no exact parallels in the four texts: he states that Jesus was born in a cave, and that a fire was kindled in Jordan at His baptism.(169) While it is possible to defend Justin to some extent on the basis that he was quoting from memory and that tradition was fresh enough for him not to have regarded the written text as of paramount importance, such a defence cannot disentangle similar variations in the case of all the Apostolic Fathers, of whom it has been said: "None of them name the Gospels or cite them with verbal exactness".(170) It is difficult to distinguish between oral and

written sources in these cases; do these quotations "come from written texts that the authors had next to them or ... the memory of fragments of the oral tradition".[171] The whole question of accurate or inaccurate memory which is frequently raised in discussions of the Apostolic fathers serves to contextualize Ibn Taymiyya's objection to the want of a tradition of accurate memorization in Christianity, as mentioned above. The difficulties inherent in the quotations of the early church fathers indicate the likelihood of their mixing their own assertions and interpretations with the tradition received from eye witness accounts.

There is little doubt that early written, as opposed to oral accounts have long since disappeared, and this would necessarily have involved the usual scribal errors of copying. Furthermore the Christian persecutions created a historical context in which manuscripts must inevitably have been destroyed, a point frequently made by Ibn Hazm and Muslim scholars in general.

The Christian Defence against Corruption

Christian apologists firstly state that there are contradictory views of the scriptures in the Qur'an. Muhammad acknowledged, and praised them on some occasions, but attacked them on others,[172] he claimed to originate from the same source, but his teaching differed from that of the Torah and the Gospels.

Ibn Hazm's Christian contemporaries raised the question of how Muslims could say that they believed in the Torah and the Gospels, drawing on them to prove Muhammad's prophecy, while simultaneously saying that these books were corrupt. Ibn Hazm, in reply, states that Muslims believe in Moses and Jesus, and the Torah and <u>Injil</u>, and furthermore, true Muslims charge anyone who denies these with unbelief. However, Muslims believe that

unbelievers among the sons of Israel had changed the Torah, and that unbelievers among Christians had corrupted the Injil by addition and omission; but that God saved some to be a testimony against the corrupters, and to judge them in the light of those parts of the Gospel that are sound.(173)

Ibn Hazm accepts parts of the four Gospels as sound and in this context those Qur'anic verses to which his critics referred as evidence of the complete soundness of their scriptures should be mentioned with his comments. One particularly important verse which specifically concerns itself with both Christian and Jewish sacred books is 5:66. "Had they performed the Torah and the Gospel, and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten both what was above them, and what was beneath their feet". Ibn Hazm comments that the truth of this is unquestionable but he seems to place a particular understanding on the word Aqamu which is not fully brought out in the translation "performed". As it appears in al-Fisal Ibn Hazm seems to regard this as signifying "observed in full" "set upright" - it is thus not merely an invocation to observe, but a request to set straight. He comments "there is no way for Christians to set their Gospels upright" because the parts they have omitted have been taken away or have vanished, leaving them without a sure foundation. Only by believing in Muhammad can the Torah and Injil be set upright, and it would then be possible for Christians and Jews to believe in what God had originally revealed in their Gospels, whether or not that still survives. They will then recognize as false the corruptions in their scriptures which consist of those parts not revealed by God.(174)

Ibn Hazm's assessment of this verse is supported by a modern Qur'anic interpreter who argues that it neither gives Christians evidence of the soundness of their scriptures, nor proof

that they have not suffered corruption - he adds that the meaning of the verse is a commandment to Jews and Christians to observe the real *Torah* and *Injil* which are implied in the Qur'an.[175]

Ibn Hazm then refers to a Qur'anic verse used by some of his critics as supposed evidence of the validity of the Christian Gospels: "So let the People of the Gospel judge according to what God has sent down therein".[176] The author of al-Fisal regards this as true. In the literal sense: in the Gospel God has, as the verse states, sent down His commandment to believe in Muhammad and to follow His religion. However, Christians are unable to judge according to what was sent down in the Gospel from which they take their name "People of the Gospel", because the Gospels in their possession are not that which was revealed by God.[177] In this passage Ibn Hazm explains that the description of the "People of the Gospel" given in this Qur'anic verse derives from the original, pure Gospel, not from the four texts known as the Gospels by his contemporary Christians. This understanding of the verse in question finds support from other scholars, among whom Ibn Kathir can be numbered.

Ibn Kathir regards the commandment as specifically directed towards Jews and Christians before the time of Muhammad, and referring to God's revelation as it appears in the Torah and the Gospel.[178]

After the time of Muhammad, however, the text to which Jews and Christians must turn is the Qur'an which abrogates every earlier book. This reading is supported by a certain Qur'anic Qira'a, (reading) "Wa Liyahkum Ahl al-Injil" which does not indicate the imperative form, and states: "We gave him (Jesus) the Gospel so that the People of the Gospel might observe what God revealed in it".[179] This refers to the genuine Gospel, and does not indicate the Gospel current during Muhammad's time.

It should be clear from the discussion above that Christians attempted to defend their texts from the charge of corruption by using the Qur'an itself as one aspect of their apology. Ibn Hazm's answer to such arguments has been indicated: however, there was another area of reference in this debate, and this consisted of the time at which the Christian texts might have undergone corruption.

An illustration of the Christian point of view can be found in the work of Ammar al-Basri, known only through two controversial books. Al-Basri disputes the possibility that the scriptures could have suffered change after the period during which they were widely circulated.(180) The same question was raised by Ibn Hazm who dated the time at which the Gospels were corrupted as predating the time at which they were written down, after which anyone making textual changes would have been immediately exposed - as has been discussed above.(181) Al Razi, too, addressed himself to the same problem, and although he was inclined to think that corruption was a matter of exegesis which had misrepresented the word of God, he was prepared to countenance the possibility that a group of people had connived to distort the Gospel at an early date, and had subsequently introduced the text to an audience who had accepted it out of ignorance.(182) Ibn Taymiyya, who made use of Ibn Hazm's arguments on this issue, is quite explicit in stating that corruption could not have taken place after the text of the scripture had been circulated in many languages all over the globe;(183) it is impossible in his view, that even secular texts could be changed after having been widely circulated. The Torah and Gospels, then, must have been distorted when they were small in number and narrow in circulation. The actual texts current in his day bore marks of an early, rather than a late corruption.(184)

The author of al-Fisal considered the problem of the existence of several Qur'anic readings but it is necessary to outline the Christian position taken up against Ibn Hazm on this matter in order to indicate the character of this attack which is ultimately directed at the Qur'an itself. The Christian apologists argued that differences in the form of the Qur'anic words discoverable in the Gospels were not distortion, but alternative readings, thus implying that there was no distinction in authoritativeness between the Qur'an itself and the Gospels.

Ibn Hazm's Christian critics sought flaws in the Islamic ascription or Isnad. They said that there were variant readings of the Qur'an, in particular they cited Abd Allah b. Mas'ud's (d. 33 AH = 653 A.C.) copy of the Qur'an as different from the current one. Secondly, they argued that some of the learned scholars in Islam stated that 'Uthman cut out many correct readings, and gathered Muslims around one of the seven readings through which the Qur'an was revealed. Thirdly, Christians argued that the Rawafid alleged that differences were perpetrated by Muhammad's Companions, as has been discussed in detail in the second chapter. The author of al-Fisal answers his critics as follows. Firstly, he argues that the addition or omission of letters does not constitute variant readings of the Qur'an; the significant factor is that the readings were passed down through an uninterrupted chain of authorities. Thus all seven readings of the Qur'an are correct, because they are each the word as revealed to Muhammad. Limited in number to seven, omission and addition cannot alter the accuracy and exactness of the seven readings. Ibn Hazm is at pains to defend Islam from the charge that some of Muhammad's Companions and followers read the Qur'an in an idiosyncratic way which is not followed by other Muslims who nevertheless reverence these figures, and that this constitutes a weakness in Isnad. He comments that while Muslims respect and

revere these figures, they do not regard them as beyond illusion and error, or as guides to be followed blindly. What they transmitted of Muhammad's words as witnesses who saw and heard him is acceptable, but it is not claimed that they were infallible; when they made pronouncements on the basis of personal opinion or speculation they offer readings which derive from the narrator's own views. The implication here is that these readings are not validated by Ijma' or consensus of opinions; and elsewhere Ibn Hazm mentions that the text could not be accepted unless all of Muhammad's Companions agreed upon it.(185) He complains here that Christians fail to sift their authorities in this fashion.

Moving to the specific question of Ibn Mas'ud's script being different, the author of al-Fisal totally rejects this, arguing that it is one of the attested seven readings of the word as revealed to Muhammad.

The argument that 'Uthman suppressed correct readings for the sake of unity is also dismissed. Ibn Hazm argues that in practical terms it would not have been possible for 'Uthman to have done this, considering the number of extant readings in his day, and the wide circulation of texts throughout the Islamic world. Furthermore, the choice of one reading was simply to identify a touchstone copy for reference purposes if anyone attempted to make changes to the text.

On the subject of Rawafid, he unambiguously rejects their authority, since in his view they are not Muslims, but a sect which, as has already been mentioned in the context of the Qur'an, arose 25 years after Muhammad's death, and which conspired against Islam. He compares this sect to Jews and Christians who corrupted their texts, and he describes the Rawafid as telling untruths about Ali.(186)

Sweetman comments on one particular aspect of Ibn Hazm's defence, that is his point that the Companions were not free from error.

Sweetman describes this as: "a serious admission because it is by the Companions that Islam has the Qur'an".[187] On this point Sweetman fails to grasp the essential thrust of Ibn Hazm's argument, which is that the Companions are not infallible as individuals, but their consensus of opinion is infallible. This is made perfectly clear in the text of al-Fisal, in a section which is not quoted by Sweetman. "Those reading to which the Christians refer are dependent only on (Mawquf) the companion or follower".[188] This statement shows that Ibn Hazm's attack was quite specifically directed at the individuality of the figures; this does not exclude the possibility of infallibility when the individual Companion played a role in consensus.

Sweetman's commentary on Ibn Hazm's attitude to the Companions makes precisely the same points made against the author by his contemporary Maliki opponents. He was accused of having represented Muhammad's Companions as inventing new aspects of the faith after the Prophet's death. Ibn Hazm defended himself stoutly, arguing that he had never attacked the Companions, from who Muslims received their faith and in whose footsteps he followed. He complained that the Malikiyya blindly followed the leader of their own school of thought, while Muslims should properly recognize that their faith was transmitted by the Sahaba, given the fulfilment of the uninterrupted chain of authorities traceable to the Prophet himself. The Sahaba, the genuine narrators, their trustworthy followers, and the traditionalists must be seen as the agents who perpetuate Islam.[189]

The Whereabouts of the Original Gospel

Collecting the points made by Ibn Hazm in this context, his view can be stated as follows. The Gospel was partly destroyed, a destruction that took place with God's permission. The author of al-Fisal differs from Ibn Taymiyya in that he does not argue for the existence of a sound version during Muhammad's lifetime, but traces the partial destruction of the Injil to the dispersal of the Apostles after Jesus' death.

Ibn Hazm's text implies that he refers to a particular written book. The author of al-Fisal does not exclude the possibility that fragments of the original might have survived, either in written form or in the memories of Jesus' followers.

Abu al-Fadl al-Maliki furthered the above statement when he used the following chapter heading in al Muntakhab, Section One which is about what was safeguarded against corruption from The Gospel.(190) Ibn Taymiyya is in agreement with the above statement, but added the following points: Christians did not distort all the versions of the Gospel. They only did so with some of them, but not with every copy. If he is correct he remarks that the Qur'an acknowledges the correct version, and attacks the corrupted one; but Ibn Taymiyya is unable to present the sound Gospel.

The same author is here indirectly attempting to resolve the problem which Christians have raised, namely that in places the kur'an calls Christians to observe their Gospel, while elsewhere it describes their Gospel as corrupted. Ibn Taymiyya, by positing the existence of an uncorrupted version of the Gospel as well as corrupted versions, suggests that the Qur'an asks Christians to observe the former and reject the latter. Such a solution is attractive at first sight, but cannot withstand close examination. If a sound version of the Gospel existed during the lifetime of

Muhammad why is there no trace of it in early Islamic writing, and why was it not preserved by Muslims? Muhammad wou'd have safeguarded such a heavenly Book if it had existed, since it contained the prophecy of his own coming; furthermore, he would not have permitted the four corrupt Gospels to have superseded the uncorrupted original.(191)

If Ibn Taymiyya cannot resolve the problem, a palatable explanation is offered by Ibn Hazm and several other Muslim scholars. The Injil was indeed partly destroyed, but also partly preserved in the four current Gospels. Muhammad was able to distinguish between the false and the genuine by revelation, not by human means. Thus it can be said that whenever the Qur'an praises the Gospel it refers to those parts of the genuine Injil incorporated into the present Gospels. The Qur'an charges the People of the Book with 'intentional distortion of the scriptures',(192) and this would indicate that Christians and Jews are fully aware of which parts of their writings are genuine and which are human additions and distortions. Consequently when the Qur'an calls them to observe their scriptures it refers to the observation of the genuine parts of their scriptures, parts which they are able to identify. Muslims would say in general that the true sayings of Jesus can be distinguished from the rest of the four Gospels in two ways: firstly, as the famous contemporary Muslim scholar, S. Abul 'Ala Maududi suggests, when certain formulas are used to introduce the words of Jesus:

> "Thus it is obvious that the first four Gospels are not the Injil, the discourses and sayings of Jesus, but they contain it. We have no means of recognizing them from the works of the authors except this: whenever the authors say, "Jesus

said so, or taught so and so", there the Injil begins and when they resume the narration, there it ends".[193]

According to the same author, if such portions are compiled and compared with the Qur'an, no serious differences between the two will be discovered; trivial differences can easily be overcome by unbiased thinking.[194]

The second possible way of identifying the true Injil is, as M. H. 'Abd al-Aziz suggests, a question of comparing the accounts of the evangelists. If and when they agree, this could be said to constitute the actual sayings and teachings of Jesus. When disagreement occurs, the text is their own writing.[195]

These two methods of approaching the Gospels exclude a good deal of material, but both diverge from Ibn Hazm's view and constitute a serious problem. The first method is not pursued by the author of al-Fisal, who discounts several passages introduced with the suggested formulae. The most obvious difficulty with the second method is that it necessitates a partial acceptance at least, of the Crucifixion which would debilitate not only Ibn Hazm's argument, but also the overall Muslim position.

Now we are in a position to say differences between the Muslim and Christian understanding of the revealed word of God - the former locating revelation in their sacred text, the latter in the person of Jesus- have determined the character of the Christian-Muslim debate concerning the Gospels. The Muslim scholars and Ibn Hazm in particular employed the methods used to determine the authenticity of Islamic sacred texts, Ibn Hazm describes the process of the corruption of the four Gospels in the light of the history of the early church, demonstrating the possibility of weak links in the chain of transmission.

The methodology he uses to find evidence of corruption ranges from the presence of Christian sectarianism, which he ascribes to the loss of the full Injil to a nice comparison of the textual details of the four Gospels. Our arguments are firmly based on detailed study of the Christian texts both evangelical and ecclesiastical, the Christian answer to the Muslim view, often taking the form of counter-attack, as has been demonstrated through-out.

FOOTNOTES

Preface :

1- The True Religion of God, A.A.B. Philips, p. 5.

Introduction:

1- For example compare with Genesis 1:272) See J.W. Sweetman, Islam and ChristianTheology, part, vol. 2, p.91

2- B. Kateregga and D. Shenk, Islam and Christianity, first published Kenya, Uzima press Ltd.,1980, p47.

3- See M. Abulaylah Christianity from the Islamic Point of View, Ph.D. Thesis pp.279 F.

4- See the thesis pp. 279 F.

5- Ibid. 281.

6- B. Kateregga and D. Shenk, Islam and Christianity, first published Kenya, Uzima press Ltd.,1980, p127.

7- Al-Fisal, vol.2 p.66

8- Al-Fisal, vol.2 p.66

Chapter 1 :

1- See Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafsir, vol.1 pp. 128 ff, and vol.2 pp.556 f and vol.3 pp.272 f.

2- See al-Firuzabadi, al-Qamus al-Muhit, (Misr, al-Babi al-Halabi 1371 A.H 1952 A.C.) second edition vol.4, pp. 226 f, Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab (Beirut, Dar Sadir 1410 A.H. 1990 A.C.) pp.166 f, and al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an, ed. by Safwan Adnan Dawudi (Beirut, Dar al-Qalam 1412 A.H - 1992 A.C.) p. 323.

3- Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafsir, vol.1 p.134.

4- Sahih al-Bukhari, bab al-Anbiya`.

5- See Qur'an 87:19, 4:163, 3:3, 5:43, 2:23, 3:3-4.

also al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Anbiya, and Fada'il al-Sahaba.

6- See Qur'an 2:132-133; 27:44; 5:111.

7- Sec M.Abu laylah, In Pursuit of Virtue, (London, Ta Ha Publishers LTD,1990).

8- Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafsir, vol.1, p.231

9- Altaf Gauharn ed. The Challenge of Islam, (London. Islam Council of Europe,1978) pp. xxvii ff.

10- Ibid.

11- See M.Abu Layla, Inter faith dialogue and Muslim approach. (forthcoming).

12- The Hadith is reported by Imam Ahmed and al-Tirmidhi, see also Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafisr, vol.3, p.100.

13- See al-Sahihin

14- See Ibn Ishaq's. Sirat Rasul Allah, translated by A.Guillanume. (Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.79-81.

15- Ibid, pp.73, 83, 99.

16- See Qur'an 2:89 and Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafsir, vol.1. p.88.

17- See Ibn Ishaq, Sirat Rasul Allah, pp.219 ff.

18- A.Mingana, The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph al-Mahdi (Combridge, Heffer and Sons LTD, 1928).

19- See M.Abu Layla, In pursuit of Virtue, pp. 84 ff.

20- James Hastings et. al.(ed,). (Edinburgh, T&T. Clark, 1906) vol.1 pp.860f.

21- Ibid.

22-See Abu Layla, Christianity from Muslim point of view.

23- See the Gospel of Barnabas, (Cairo, Dar al-Manar,) p.96.

24- Vol.1, p.82.

25- See Ifham al-Yahud, p.50.

26- Ibid. see also, Ibn Taymiyya al-Jawab al-Sahih, vol.3 pp.275 ff.

27- See Izhar al-Haqq, pp.327 ff. and Ahmed Didat's booklet on Christianity.

28- See Muhammad in the Bible , (Sarawak, Angkalan Nahdtiatul Islam Beratu, pp.156 f. and M. Cook.

29- Patricia Crone and M.Look. Hagarism (London, 1985) p.8.

30- Ibn Hazm, al-Fisal, (Cairo, Subayh, 1964), vol. l. 78.

31- Sirat Rasul Allah, p.103.

32- See Qur'an, 3:58; 12:104; 16:44, 38:87; 27; 20:3, 79:48; 88;21.

Chapter 2 :

1- See Qur'an, 17:88.

2- This hadith is reported by Abu Musa al - Ashari and unanimously recorded by the Muhaddthin, the Muslim traditionalists.

3- The hadith is reported by Abd Allah Ibn Mas and is unaimously accepted by all Muslim authorities. For futher reading on this point see al - Chazali, Ihya Ulum al- Din, (Beirut, Dar al - Kitab al - Arabi, n .d.) vol. 3, pp. I I Iff' Ibn Taymiyya, . Manjm'at al-Rasail Wa 'l Masail, ed. by Rashid Rida, (Cairo, Lajnat al-Turath al Arabi, n.d.) vol. 3 pp I8ff and Mnhammad Abu Layla, al-Qur'an al karim Duatur al-Muslimin, al Muslimoom, weakly newspaper, (London I 406 A .H, I986) vol. 2, number 7I. p.8.

4- See Arthur J Arberry's introduction to the Koran intereted (Lond. Oxford Universtiy Press, 1969), P.X: also Muhammad Salih al-Bindaq, al-Qur'an wa'l Mustashriqun, (Beirut......), P. 106.

5- See Ibn Hazm, al- Fisal, vol. 2, pp. 23 ff, also R. Pfeiffer, Introdution pp. 68 ff and 12o ff, Freederic Kenyon, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, (London Eyre and Spottiswood, 1939), pp.34 f, and N. Rifat Ibn Hazm on Jews and Judaism, pp. 220 ff.

6- Maiaz al - Qur'an, ed. by M. Fu'ad Sarkin, (Cairo, al - khanji and Dar al-Fikr, 1390 A. H., 1970 A .C.) pp. I f.

7- See N. Rifat, Ibn Hazm on Jews and Judaism, pp. 225 ff.

8- On this subjcet see Muhy al-Din Yahya Ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi (621- 676 A. H.), al-Manhal al-Rawi min Taqrib al-Nawawi ed. by Mustafa al Khad (Beirut, Dar al Mallah, n .d) pp. 29f. Abu Amer Ibn al-Salah, (642 A. H, 1244 A.C.) Muqaddima fi Ilm al Hadith (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya 1398 A.H. 1978 A.C.), pp. 1 ff., Abu Amr Uthamn Ibn Abd Al-Rahman al-Shahrazwri (577 - 643 A.H.), 'Ulum al - Hadith, ed . by Nur al-Din Itr (Al-Madina al-Munawara, 1972), and Abu Muhammad Abd Al-Rahman Al-Razi, (240 - 327), Ilal al-Hadith,. (Cairo, al-Muthanna, 1343).

9- The phrase "reminding Qur'an" in our translation atands for the Arabic word "dhikr" "Qur'an" and "dhik" are synonymous. The Qur'an came to put all humanity into remembrance of the orignal and pure religion (Fitra) upon which Allah has originated mankind.

10- See Ibn Ishaq, Sirat, P. 86.

11- Al- Bukhari, Sahih (kitab bad ' ai wahy).

12- See al - Ghazali, Ihya' vol. 8, P .89, also my forthcoming book Muslim Morality

13- See Qur'an 2: 85.

14- See Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, al-Itqan, vol.1, p. 85 : also Badr al - Din Muhammad Ibn Abd Allah al-Zarkashi, al-Burhan fI Ulum al-Qur'an ed by Muhammad abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, (Cairo, al-Halabi, 1972), vol. 1, p. 238 : and Abu abd Allah al-Zinjant, Tarikh al-Qur'an, (Beirut, 1388 A. H.: 1969 A .C .), P. 44.

15- Al-Zinjani, Tarikh al-Qur'an, P. 44.

16- Al- Bukhari, Sahih, vol. 6. p. 110.

17- Al - Bukhari "kitab khalq Af'al al-Ibad", In Ali Sami al-Nashshar

and Ammar al-Talibi, Aqaid al-Salaf, (Cairo, al 0 Ma'arif, 1971), P. 156.

18- Al-Bukhari " Sahih (kitab al-Jihad)

19- Al-Suyuti, Tarikh al khulata . ed by Muhammad Muhy al Din Abd Al-Hamid, (Baghdad, al-Muthanna, 1383 A. H. 1964 A. C.) p.174 .

20- Ibn Hazm, al-Fisal, vol. 2, pp. 81 - 84 : also Ibn Hazm, al-Radd Ala Ibn al-Nighrila, pp 77 f.

21- Ibn al-Jazari, Kitab al-Nashr fi al-Qira'at al-Ashr, (Cairo, al Halabi, n. d.) vol. 2, p 254 also Ahmad Makki al-Ansari, al-Difa' An al-Qur'an (Cairo, Dar al Ma ' arif, I393 A. H. I 973 A.C.) part, I, P. I20.

22- Al-Suuyuti, al-Itqan, vol. I, p. 72.

23- M Bartnel, What ten Bible really says, (England, Souvenir press L .td, 1982) pp. 11f.

24- See al-Samau'al al-Maghribi, Ifham al-Yahud, pp . 49 ff .

25- See M. Barthel, what Bible really says, p. 292, also C. R. Greory, Canon and Text of the New Testament, (Edinbugh, T. & T . Clark, 1907), pp. 19ff.

26- J.A.R. "Canon" in T.K. Cheyne and J.S.Black, Encycloaedia Biblicea, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1899), vol 1, col, 676.

27- See A. Mingana, The Transmission of the Qur'an (Woodbrooke Studies, Cambridge, 1928), vol, 2, p 39.

28- Al-Fakhri, Fi al-Adab al Sultaniyya Na'l Dawla al Ialamiyya, (Akka, n, d.) pp. 244 f .

29- Ibn Abd Al-Malik, al-Dhayl wa'L Takmila, ed. by Muhammad Ibn Sharifa (Beirut, Dar al-Thaqafa, 1963) part, I vol. I p.89.

30- Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima , ed . by Abd Al-Wahid wafi (cairo, Dar Nahdat, Misr, n. d.) vol. 3, pp . 842.ff.

31- Al-dhahabii, Tadhkira al - Huffaz, (Hxderabad, Dar al-Ma' arif al-Uthmaniyya, 1958) vol. 3, pp. 842 ff.

32- Ibid .

33- Al-Bukhari, Fada' il al Qur'an.

34- See Ahamad Ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi, Manaqib al-Shafi'i, ed. by Ahmad Saqr, (Cairo, Dar al-Turath, 1391 A. H, 1971) vol. I pp. 280 f also Yaqut, Irshad al-Arib, (Brirut, Dar al-Muatashriq, 1922) vol. 17. p. 284.

35- Al Dhahabi, Mizan al-I'tidal, ed. by Al-Bijjawi, (Cairo, al-halabi, 1963) vol. p. 385

36- See his book al-Taysir Fi Al-qira' at al-Sab, (Istanbul, Matba' at al-Dawla, 1930) pp. dal and ha .

37- Al-Dhahabi, Tadhkira, vol. 3, p. 1108

38- Al-Marrauahi, al-Dhul, vol. 6, p. 398.

39- Ibid, vol. 5, p 488.

40- See e. g. Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi, Taqdimat al-Ma' rifa li ktab al-Juruti. al - Suyuti, Is'af al-Mubatta' bi Rijal al-Muwatta' (Beirut, n. d.) pp. 4f and Ibn Hazm, al-Nubadh fi Usul al-Fiqh al-Zahiri, ed. by Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari, (cairo, Matbabat al-Anwsr, 1940) p. 2I.

<u>Chapter</u> 3 :

1. R. Arnaldes "Ibn Hazm" (E.I.),vol. 3,pp. 795 f.

2. Ibn Hazm,al-Fisal,vol. 1,p. 79.

3. Arguments about the authenticity of Josephus's authorship can be found in Robert Grant,op. cit.,pp. 291 f; X.L. Dufour,The Gospels and the Jesus of History,trans. and ed. by J. McHugh (London,Collins Sons and Co.,1968),pp. 35 f; see also Georges Berguer, Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus,trans. by Eleanor Stimson Brooks and van Wyck Brooks, (London,Williams and Norgate,1923),pp. 65 f,and W. H Allen (ed.),The Standard

Jewish Encyclopedia,(london,Cecil Roth B,1966) pp. 1064 f.

4- Ibn Hazm,al-Fisal,vol. 2, pp. 20,37 and 40; see also Ibn Hazm, al-Usual wa al-Furu, vol. 1, p. 212 and al-Biruni, al-Athar al-Baqiya, p. 32.

5- R. Arnaldes,"Ibn Hazm, (E.I.), vol. 3, p. 796.

6- Ibn Hazm,al-Fisal, vol. 2,p. 20.

7- B.H. Streeter,op. cit., p. 439.

8- Origen quoted by J.N.D. Kelly, op. cit., pp. 61 f.

9- Gregory the Great,moral Praefatio, I, quoted by R.E. Brown, "Inspiration and Inerrancy" (J.B.C.), VOL 2,203.

10- Ibid; see also David A. Pallin,"Revelation",(N.D.C.T.), p. 505.

11- Sweetman,op. cit., part 2, vol. 1, p. 156; see also Timothy, pp. 47 and 60.

12- Ibn Hazm, al-Fisal, vol. 2, pp. 34,44,47,50,60 and 62.

13- Vol. 1, p. 212; see also Adolf Julicher, An Introduction to the New Testament, trans. by Janet Penrose Ward (London, Smyth Elder and Co., 1904), pp. 317 and 30.

14- A. Richardson, Preface to the Bible Study (London, Student Christian Movement Press,1943),p. 23,and R.E. Brown, "Inspiration and Inerrancy" (J.B.C.), vol. 2, p. 503.

15- See W. Barclay, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 10.

16- P. 48, quoted by Ibid.

17- The so-called Kerygma and the Historical Jesus, (E. Oliver and Boyd, 1959), pp. 21 ff.

18- The Gospels and the Jusus of History,p.

21- Further reading on this subject can be found in H.R. Mackintosh, The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark,1927), pp. 6 ff.

19- Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, vol. 3, pp. 32 f.

20- Ibid., vol. 3, p. 33.

21- "Chrysostom", Part 1, p. 4

22- Ibn Hazm, al-Usul wa al-Furu, vol. 1, p. 212; see also al-Jahiz, Thalath Rasail, p. 24.

23- Al-Milal wa al-Nihal, vol. 3, pp. 32 f.

24- Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn al-Husayn al-Masudi,Muruj al-Dhahab wa Maadin al-Jawhr,ed. by Muhammad Muhyi al-Dain Abd al-Hamid, (Cairo, Matbaat al-Saada, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 62 ff.

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Chapter 4 :

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24- Ibid., and (R. 2). p. 60.

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27- Ibid., see also (R. 2), p. 60.

28- Ibid.

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32- Ibid. The above statement (concerning the word IN) goes back to al-Hasan and al-Husayn Ibn al-Fadl, as Abu Hayyan states in al-Bahr al-Muhit, (Cairo, Matba'at al-Saada, 1328 AH), vol. 5, p. 191; see also (R. 2), p. 60. The footnote.

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35- G. Parrinder, op. cit., p. 145.

36- David Friedrich strauss, A New Life of Jesus, (London, Williams and Norgate, 1879), vol. 1, p. 56, concerning the question of why there are four Gospels only, see Ibid., and the argument of Irenaeus, in J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius (London, S.P.C.K., 1980), pp. 122 f; also C.R. Gregory, op. citl, pp. 55. ff. W. Montgomery watt in his book Companion to the Qur'an (P.46), points out that: "The Torah (Hebrew for 'law' or 'instruction') is properly the Books of Moses or Pentateuch, but, as the revealed scripture of the Jews, may be said to correspond to the (Christian) Old Testament. Similarly,

the Gospel (Ar. Injil) is assumed to be a single book, and, as the scripture of the Christian, may stand for the whole New Testament".

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129- See "Timothy", pp. 33 ff.

130- Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an, ed, by M. Ahmed Khalaf Allah, (Cario, al-Anjilo al-Misriyya, 1965), vo. 1 pp. 122f.

131- Ibn Atiya, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 326; see also Ibn Kathir, Mukhtasar Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 1, pp. 80, 294 and 399; Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni, Safwt al-Tafasir, (Beirut, Dar al-Qur'an al Karim, 1981), vol. 1, p. 212 and M. Ignazio de Matteo, op. cit., pp. 66 ff.

132 - Jami' al-Bayan An Tawil Ay al-Qur'an vol. 6, p. 536; also vol. 5, pp. 299 f and I.H. El Hardallo, op. cit., pp. 17 f.

133- Tafsir, p. 93 and al-Tabari, Jami, vol. 3, p. 143.

134- Timothy, pp 33 ff.

135- Ibid., pp. 47 f.

136- See p. 86 and Ibid., pp. 33 ff.

137- Abu Uthman Amru Ibn Bakr al-Jahiz, Thalath Rasail, ed. by J. Finkel (Cario, al-Salafiyya Press, 1926), p. 143.

138- M. Ignazio de Matteo, op. cit., p. 76.

139- Ibn Taymiyya, al-Jawab al-Sahih, vol. 2, p. 342.

140- Al-Athar al-Baqiya, pp. 13 ff and p. 32 f.

141- Fakhr al-Din Abu Abd Allah al-Razi, Mafatih al-Ghayb (Cairo, al-Bahiyya al-Misriyya, n.d.), vol. 2, pl 183; see also vol. 1, p. 135, vol. 8, pp. 98 ff and 114, vol. 10, pp. 117 f, vol. 11, p. 187 and pp. 232 f and J. Wansbrough, op. cit., pp. 189 f. it is however to be noted that such an idea has appeared in the recent time in the work of Sayyid Ahmed Khan, who was the first Muslim to write a Bible commentary which argued that exposition has been at fault rather than any tampering with the text. Another writer says that in the Qur'an Tahrif "distortion" means either false interpretation of the passages bearing upon Muhammad or non-enforcement of the explicit laws of the Pentateuch; as for the text of the Bible it had not been altered.. no rival text is assumed. The Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Ahemd Khan p. 78; M.A. Ananikian, The Moslim World, XIV, pp. 61 ff; see Geoffrey Parrinder, op. cit., p. 147.

142- Al-Mua'mmir, op. cit., pp. 77 f; see also Ibn Qutayba, Tafsir Gharib al-Qru'an, p. 56.

143- Al-Shahrastani op. cit., vol 3, p. 11; Mujahid, op. cit., pp. 140; see also Ibn Taymiyya, Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim Mukhalafat Ashab al-Jahim, ed. by Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni (Saudi Arabia, Matabi al-Majd, 1390 A.H.), p. 8, and Abd al-Salam Harun, op. cit., pp. 262 and 360.

144- Al-Jawab al-Sahih, vol. 2, p. 5, and vol. 1, pp. 341 ff; see also Ibn Taymiyya, al-Furqan Bayna al-Haqq wa al-Batil, ed. by 'Id Muhammad Abu al-Wafa, (Cairo, Maktabat al-Imam, n.d.), p. 74.

145- See Ibid.

146- Al-Jawab al-Sahih, vol. 2, pp. 13 f and al-Ghazali, al-Radd al-Jamil, p. 242.

147- Al-Jawab al-Sahih, vol. 2, pp. 11-17; see also Chrysostom,

part 1, p.4.

148- James Moffatt, An introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1993), pp. 37 f; see also Vincent Taylor, The Text of the New Testament, a short introduction, (London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1961), p. 51.

149- B.H. Streeter, op. cit., p. 30.

150- James Moffatt, op. cit., p. 38.

151- See p. 18

152- A fresh aproach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature, (London and New York, 1936), p. 34; see also William Barclay, The Gospels and Acts, (London, S.C.M. Press, 1976), vol. 1, p. 32; and C.H. Dodd, About the Gospels, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 14 f.

153- The Gospels and Acts, vol. 1, p. 32.

154- Ibid.

155- John Marsh, The Gospel of St. John, (London, Cox and Wyman Ltd,. 1976), pp. 653 f.

156- Robert Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, (London, William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1974), p. 46; see also Arthur S. Peake, A Critical Introduction to the New Testament, (London, Duckworth and Co., 1919), p. 102.

157- A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, p. 46; see also C.K. Barrett, op. cit., pp. 490 ff.

158- Al-Furqan, pp. 76 f.

159- "Tahrif", The Moslim World, vol XIV, p. 70.

160- Ibid., p. 84.

161- M. Watt, The Early Development of the Muslim Attitude to the Bible, (U.K., Glasgow University Oriental Society, 1955-6), vol. 16, p. 53; see also M. Watt, What is Islam, (London and Harlow, Longmans Green and Co,. Ltd. Librairie